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Wednesday April 17 1996

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The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,529

Why everybody loves the MP for Ladywood

Short, sharp shock

G2 with European

David Steel's son and the cannabis plant

Six months up in smoke

See story G2 page 11

Society

Driving into oblivion

G2 pages 12/13

Queen agrees to £2m divorce settlement but Sarah Ferguson is left with huge and mounting debts

Palace cuts Duchess adrift

First step to end marriage in court today

Edward Pilkington

THE Duke and Duchess of York are to divorce at the end of next month, ending four years of uncertainty about their future and heralding the final freezing out of Sarah Ferguson from the royal family.

It is understood that the duchess will be paid £2 million under the settlement in return for agreeing to be cut adrift from the monarchy. The pay-off was formulated three years ago at the time of the couple's legal separation, and is framed primarily with their children in mind.

Buckingham Palace said the Queen has been informed of the official split and was "saddened" by the news. The announcement comes five days before her 70th birthday. The duke and duchess announced their decision to part through their solicitors, Henry Boyd-Carpenter of the firm used by the Queen, Farrer & Co, on behalf of Prince Andrew, and Douglas Alexton of Gordon Dadds for the duchess.

A joint statement from the lawyers stressed that the decision to end the marriage was taken by the royal couple. "The decision is a personal one, and theirs alone."

The comment ran counter to suggestions that the couple were under pressure from the Queen to end their marital limbo. It is understood that the Queen last month wrote to Prince Andrew urging him to divorce in terms similar to her earlier letters to the Prince and Princess of Wales, a suggestion denied by the palace.

In a further parallel with the negotiations with Princess Diana, the duchess will lose the title "Her Royal Highness", while continuing to be called the Duchess of York. The official statement said she had "chosen not to use the HRH style, although the palace would almost certainly have resisted any attempt on her part to retain it."

The statement continued

that "at the express wish of the duke and duchess and in the interests of their children, which they regard as of paramount importance, no further statement will be made or information provided".

The children, Beatrice, aged seven, and Eugenie, six, "will continue to live with the duchess, and both parents will participate fully in their upbringing". In practice, that implies that the girls, who are fifth and sixth in line to the throne, will spend most of their time with their mother, enjoying the company of Prince Andrew only when he is on leave from naval duties.

Fears that the children will suffer from the duchess's frequent travelling strongly influenced negotiations over her financial settlement. Since March 1992, when separation was first mooted, the children's stability has been jeopardised by moves from the couple's mansion at Sunninghill into a rented home, Romonda Lodge, in Surrey, and by the loss of their pet poodles.

A sum of £1.5 million is to be placed in trust for the girls, from which £500,000 is understood to be earmarked for a house that they will eventually own. Further money will be set aside to provide a cash income for the young princesses.

The Queen is understood to have stood her ground in refusing to bail out the duchess, who has acute financial problems. Her debts, understood to be about £3 million, are unlikely to be cleared by the settlement.

The final agreement may see the duchess paid as little as £500,000, probably not as a lump sum. Although Prince Andrew will pick up the tab for school fees and cover some of her rent out of his £240,000 allowance from the Queen, that still leaves the duchess's lavish spending and debts to account for.

The Archbishop of York said he was praying for the couple, adding that "such decisions are never made easily".

Toby Jessel, MP for Twickenham, called the duchess a



The Duke and Duchess of York remain good friends despite the agreement to divorce, four years after their separation

"person of sheer, unadorned vulgarity, not in keeping with Britain's royal traditions". Fellow Tory John Butcher, MP for Coventry, said: "Fergie would have been more suited married to Bob Geldof than to the son of the Queen."

Lord St John of Fawsley, the royal expert, said: "I hope that stories about the Yorks will disappear from the headlines now, but my hopes are

greater than my expectations." The divorce adds to the history of marital breakup in the duchess's family. When she was 14 her parents broke up after her mother, Susan, left her father for an Argentine polo player. The duchess's sister, Jane Makin, had an acrimonious divorce in 1989.

Life after divorce is likely to see the duke and duchess

moving in starkly opposing directions. Prince Andrew, who is thought to have just returned from naval exercises, has been focusing on his career. The duchess, who is sitting in Switzerland with the children, has attempted to focus media attention on her charity work, particularly with the American-based Chances for Children, but has been unable to avoid public-

ity about her relationships and financial crisis.

The first step in the issuing of a decree nisi will take place today. The case of "HRH the Duke of York v HRH the Duchess of York" is listed among 29 uncontested divorces to be heard at the family division of the High Court in London.

Decline and fall, page 3



Sarah says:

'Andrew is a darling, but a boring darling' 'I always pay my way' 'Life is not about gossip or tittle-tattle, it is the air we breathe — being nice to people' 'It wasn't that I lacked will or ability. I simply didn't know what was expected of me'

And what they say about her:

'A vulgarian . . . vulgar, vulgar, vulgar' — Lord Charteris, the Queen's former private secretary 'She devalues the currency' — Princess Michael of Kent 'She is an experienced woman who can tell me a lot' — Thomas Muster, tennis player

Poverty, what poverty? says Lilley

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

MINISTERS are renegeing on a commitment to draw up measures to tackle poverty in Britain because they say such action is needed only in Third World countries. The move will inflame controversy over the extent of poverty in this country. It will be seen as a snub to the United Nations, which has declared 1996 the international year for the eradication of poverty.

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, has told welfare campaigners the Government will not be introducing a national poverty eradication plan as agreed by countries including Britain at last year's UN summit on social development in Copenhagen. "The UK [already has] the infrastructure and social protection systems to prevent

poverty and maintain living standards."

A Foreign Office spokesman yesterday confirmed that John Major had replied in similar vein to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, who had asked what Britain was doing.

The Government's cold shoulder to the UN, has emerged as a report today claims poverty is growing faster in Britain than in most of Europe.

The report, published by the Child Poverty Action Group, says one in three children is growing up in poverty. In 1979, the figure was one in 10. One in four of all people is living in poverty, compared with one in seven when the Tories took office. The Copenhagen summit in March last year was attended by Whitehall officials and Lady Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, who signed a joint declaration and programme of action on Brit-

Beef crisis 'will cost 28,000 jobs and taxpayer £550m in first year'

Paul Brown, David Heston and Stephen Bates

THE beef crisis will cost 28,000 people their jobs and the taxpayer £550 million in compensation this year, the Government said yesterday as it announced a series of measures to restore confidence in the market.

John Major said he would go to the European Court of Justice to challenge the worldwide ban on British beef and ruled out a mass cull of cattle. Instead, 40,000 tonnes of beef in cold stores are to be destroyed at a cost of £80 million. Coopers & Lybrand, the accountants commissioned to advise ministers on the crisis, do not expect the industry to recover for five years and say the ban on exports will last at least six months. Unsold meat worth £132 million had been found, which could lead to wide-

spread company failures soon. The consultants warn that, apart from job losses in the industry, the effect will be more general unemployment, lower tax receipts and a blow to the balance of payments. The European Court will be asked for "interim relief within weeks" and a declaration that the ban on British beef is illegal. The Prime Minister is to write to the German, French and Italian leaders and to Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, demanding they take early action to lift the ban. This follows comments by Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, that the ban was aimed at saving the European beef market, not protecting the public health. Downing Street said Mr Major would turn to page 2, column 3. Demand 'won't recover for five years', page 5; Leader comment, page 5.

Inside Britain

ASSA, which helped bring down the National Government, is now being used to help bring down some medicines.

World News

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City

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Sport

England's row with its fellow five nations competitors over television rights to Rugby Union has deepened.

Comment and Letters

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Prague Writers' Festival 1996

The Viola Theatre, May 9-11

This year the Prague Writers' Festival, directed by Michael March, will once again showcase a selection of fine authors from around the world. Under the festival's theme of "Ancient Evenings", writers including R.S. Thomas from Wales, Sylva Fischerová of the Czech Republic, and Jim Barnes from the USA will be presenting their work at the festival. There visitors can enjoy a rare opportunity to listen to, and meet, these renowned international authors.

For more details call: 44 (0) 171 7134133

Sponsored by The Guardian



Sketch

Monologues take over the asylum



Simon Hoggart

MPs RETURNED to Westminster eager to discuss one of the worst humiliations ever inflicted on a great party...

about tax rises. But then he changed the subject. These days Prime Minister's Questions is in no way an interchange...

First night

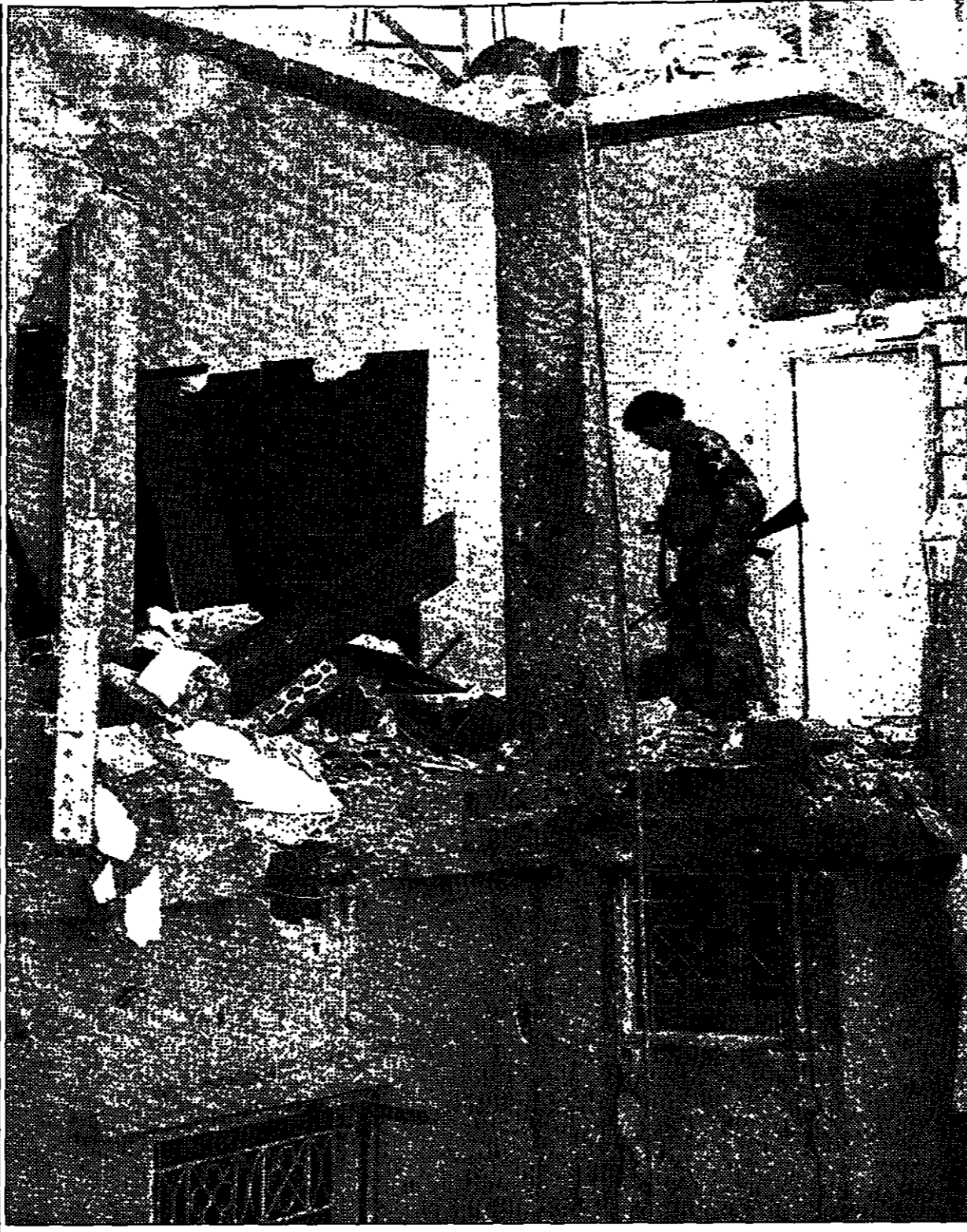
The King shakes his thang - again

Caroline Sullivan

Elvis - The Musical

THIS show has already strutted its spangly jumpsuit once before. After Presley died in 1977...

that the Elvster might have eaten a few too many toffeeburgers, but he was still a good boy.



A Palestinian guerrilla inspects damage in Lebanon's Ain el-Hilweh refugee camp yesterday

Israel targets Palestinian rebel

'Precision bombing' in Lebanon misses anti-Arafat commander

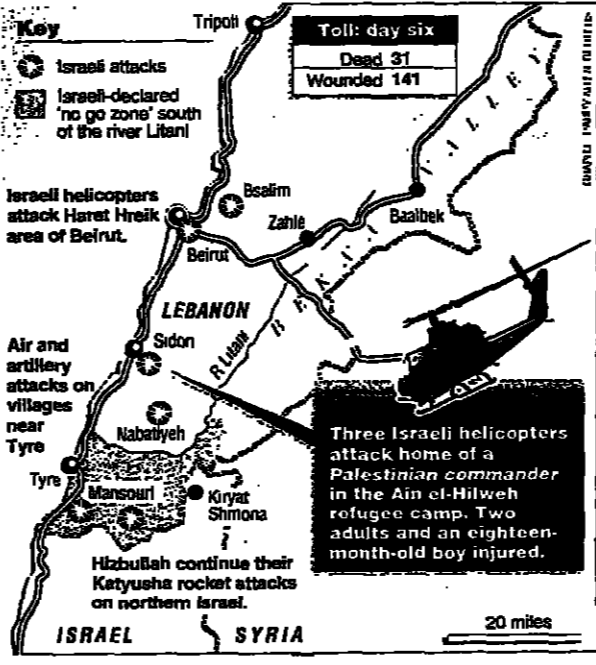
David Hirst

In Ain el-Hilweh camp

IN EHILWEH, the Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Sidon, had a taste yesterday morning of what Israel had in mind when it warned that its army was 'contemplating extending its zone of operations in the region between the Zaharani and Awali rivers'...

from the sea. The structure collapsed, but - perhaps because of its flimsy materials - the young couple who lived in it came out alive...

The onslaught continues



controlled Lebanon. The Iranian ambassador visits him. He conspires openly against Mr Arafat. Eighteen months ago, Mr Arafat ordered his last loyalist forces in Lebanon to try to seize control of Ain el-Hilweh from him...

Voters fear worst from rail sell-off

Martin Kettle

THE public believes that train services will be worse, less safe and more costly after privatisation, according to a Guardian ICM poll before today's House of Commons rail debate.

Rail views

When British Rail is fully privatised do you think services will be?

Bar chart showing rail service views: Better (33), Worse (47), Don't know (20), Safer (34), Less safe (43), Don't know (24), Cheaper (12), Dearer (79), Don't know (8).

Conservatives remain loyal to the Government, with 51 per cent saying privatisation will mean better services and 24 saying they will be worse.

Short taxed again by Blair lecture

Rebecca Smithers and Patrick Wintour

LABOUR transport spokeswoman Clare Short was summoned to a meeting with party leader Tony Blair yesterday in his attempt to put the lid on the row over her remark that middle income earners could pay more tax.

and the importance of collective responsibility. It is the second time in six months Ms Short has had a lecture from Mr Blair on collective responsibility...

Only top 2 per cent fall into Labour's tax increase net

Larry Elliott

Economics Editor

CLARE SHORT'S suggestion that she would expect to be pay more tax if Labour targeted high earners is borne out by figures showing that MPs - for all their grumbling about their £34,000 salaries - are among the best paid people in Britain.

2.2 million pay the higher 40 per cent rate of tax, which kicks in at just over £33,000 for a single person.

Beef crisis 'will cost 28,000 jobs and taxpayer £550m'

continued from page 1

Major would also raise the issue with European colleagues during his visit to Moscow to discuss other problems in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The export ban on British beef imposed by the Community is more motivated by the interests of other countries' own beef markets than it is about public health.

Strang, the agriculture spokesman, said: "Legal action is likely to take months to reach the courts, so it cannot be a substitute for energetic political and diplomatic action to secure an agreed lifting of the ban."

Labour attacked Mr Major's decision to go to the European court. Gavin

Ramaphosa moves into South African business

David Beresford

in Johannesburg

THE former labour leader Cyril Ramaphosa has thrown himself into negotiations for one of South Africa's biggest business takeovers.

Africa's constitutional settlement has begun talks with black business and union leaders to prepare a bid to wrest control of the leading investment company Johnica from the Anglo-American corporation.

Cruise to Calais in comfort...

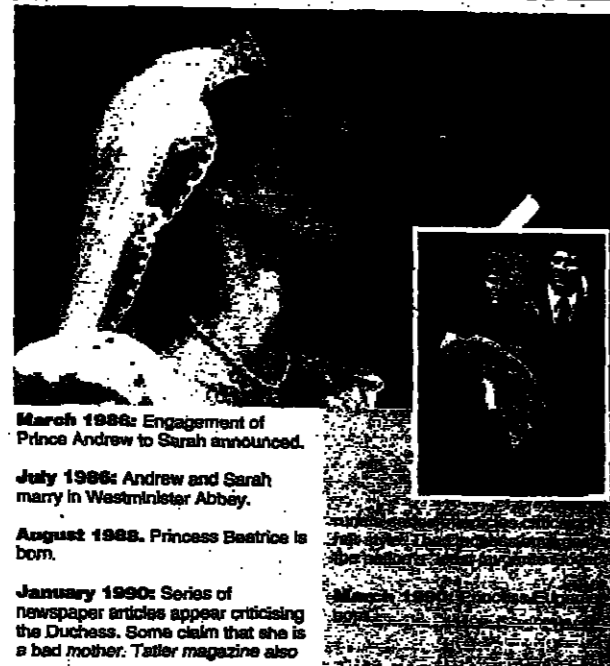
RELAX and just cruise across from Dover to Calais - the shortest sea route to France. Large, luxurious car ferries with shops, restaurants and entertainment on board...



Calais ...begins with sea. For a shopping day, a relaxing stay or for immediate access to motorway... Dover/Calais over 140 crossings daily by P&O European Ferries, Stena Line, SeaFrance & Hoverspeed.

صحننا من الاعمال

...fear from 11-off



March 1986: Engagement of Prince Andrew to Sarah announced. July 1986: Andrew and Sarah marry in Westminster Abbey. August 1988: Princess Beatrice is born. January 1990: Series of newspaper articles appear criticising the Duchess. Some claim that she is a bad mother. Tatler magazine also...

January 1982: Photographs are found in a London flat of the Duchess on holiday with Texan millionaire Steve Wyatt. The photos, some of which were published in British newspapers, show the Duchess and her friend with Princess Beatrice during a holiday in the South of France in 1980. They also show the Duchess with her arms around Wyatt. March 1982: The Yorks announce their separation. Charles Anson, the Queen's press secretary, accuses the Duchess of claiming that she is 'unsuitable for Royal and public life'. His comments came during a private briefing with journalists. At the same time Buckingham Palace announces the scrapping of all her Royal engagements. May 1982: The Duchess moves out of the marital home at Sunninghill Park, Surrey to a rented house in Weymouth, two miles away.



June 1982: Announcement made that the Duke and Duchess of York had reached agreement on the terms of a legal separation. July 1982: The Duchess's attempts to become a fund-raiser for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees are abandoned. Both Buckingham Palace and Prime Minister John Major were reported to be angry at her attempt to secure the job. January 1983: Lord Charteris, one of the Queen's advisers, describes the Duchess of York as 'vulgar, vulgar, vulgar'.

January 1986: Reports appear that the Duchess is engaged for £100,000 in the High Court after she failed to pay a loan to a friend. Later business claims that the Duchess is up to £2 million in debt and details also appear of her seven glisters and fine-spitting wigs. Queen refuses to bail her out. January 1986: The Duchess signs a multi-million pound deal for the rights to her Budgie cartoon character. Deal believed to include world wide television, video and book rights.



February 1986: The Duchess tells out with her friends. Ryan, she says, is a 'divine time for the helicopter'. She claims that she had a 'wonderful time' with the profits. Details about 'ideas and the Duchess' affair with the Duke. Treasurer to the Queen. See p. 10. March 1986: The Duchess is invited with her friends. March 1986: The Duchess of York and Prince Andrew will have a special occasion at Somerset House today.

Decline and fall of the House of York

The men in Fergie's life

Paddy McNally
THE 58-year-old multi-millionaire motor racing consultant is a widower and former manager of the racing driver Niki Lauda. He and the Duchess spent several years together, and many thought they would last the full circuit and marry despite the age difference — she was in her early 20s, he in his late 40s. He once said any man would be lucky to go out with her, let alone marry her.

The Duke of York

THE Queen's second son, aged 36, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, married the Duchess in 1986. While single he gained a fearsome reputation as a ladies' man, earning the nickname Randy Andy. The two are thought to have been brought together by Princess Diana, who often invited Sarah around for lunch at Kensington Palace. Their love was believed to have "taken off" during Ascot in 1985 over a dish of profiteroles in the royal box when Sarah was on a diet.

Steve Wyatt

TEXAN millionaire, aged 42. When details of their affair emerged, he was described as a cross between Bobby Ewing of Dallas fame and the Incredible Hulk. The two met through mutual friends and photographs of the couple on holiday were found in a London flat. Prince Andrew was said to be infuriated by one photograph with Wyatt and dling Eugenie on his knee. Later reports claimed he got girlfriends to dress up in exotic underwear while they made love under a pyramid because he thought it had mystical healing powers. The Duchess refused to comment. He made his money in oil, and is now married to an American, Cate Magennis.

John Bryan

ANOTHER Texan oil man, aged 41, and he of the toe-sucking fame, who has certainly chesed off the Duchess. He plans to sue her for a share of the profits of Budgie the Helicopter and is considering a "kiss and tell" book detailing their affair. Her former financial adviser, and an old school chum of Wyatt, he became close to her after her marriage split up. He tried to stop publication of the photographs which showed the couple kissing and cuddling in San Tropez, France. One of his last public engagements with royalty was when he was spotted dancing with the Duchess at Annabel's nightclub in London. Asked about the photographs, which also showed him rubbing suntan oil on the Duchess's legs as she sunbathed topless, he said: "Anything can look bad, can't it?"

Thomas Muster

PROFESSIONAL tennis player, aged 28, he left his former fiancée Mariella after he met the Duchess through friends in Qatar in January. In March, the Duchess flew to Miami to visit Muster, who was in a tournament, but he lost to a player ranked 12nd in the world. Friends claimed he had other things on his mind. He said he had discussed ending the engagement with the Duchess: "She's an experienced woman who can tell me a lot."

John F Kennedy Jnr

THE Duchess has never met this 35-year-old editor of a political magazine but friends claim she would like to marry him. He is known as "the hunk" and is often referred to as the sexiest man in America. The Duchess calls him Ken. The two "met" on the pages of Hello, when she saw pictures of him: "Everything will be okay when I marry Ken," she is reported to have said.

Navy and Court helped divide great friends

Edward Pilkington

THE wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson at Westminster Abbey on July 23, 1986, inevitably looked pale and insignificant beside that other wedding of five years previously. But then, being the second son of the monarch means you are forever overshadowed. Such unflattering comparisons notwithstanding, the ceremony went without a hitch and served its purpose. Commentators noted that marriage was just the thing for Andrew — adding, *sotto voce*, that it would force him to curb his playboy image. But warning lights began to flash early in the relationship. For Buckingham Palace, niggling qualms about the new arrival quickly grew into panic that they had backed the wrong horse. Less than a year after the wedding, the duchess acquired her helicopter "wings" in an attempt, she said, to play a closer part in her husband's life. Such a stunt was typical of the woman that Buckingham Palace at first embraced, but increasingly came bitterly to regret. It was during and earned the duchess's praise for her guts and determination; but it was hardly the done thing. The couple enjoyed a few golden years. Financially, they did handsomely out of the marital settlement. As a wedding present, Prince Andrew was granted an instant 50 per cent rise in his civil list allowance of £38,000 a year. By 1989 that amount had risen to £158,400, topped up with the duke's naval salary. They could afford to build a \$5 million Tudor-style mansion in Sunninghill Park, near Windsor Castle.



The duchess taking daughters Beatrice (left) and Eugenie to a pantomime in December 1994. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN KEENE

In hindsight the luxury in which they lived was counterbalanced by the strains of royal life. Foremost was the fact that the couple rarely spent time together. In 1988 the Duke of York announced his intention to make a lifetime's career in the navy. "Jobs for people like us are hard to find," he quipped. In June that year, two months before the birth of their first child, Beatrice, he embarked on a tour of duty on board HMS Edinburgh that would take him away for six months. "Before getting married I never bothered about going away, because it was fun. But I think to be split from one's wife for so long cannot be good for the long-term relationship," he said. And so it appears to have proved. In the second career-debit act of her royal career, the Duchess decided to take matters into her own hands and flew out in October 1988 to catch her husband in Sydney. She was widely censured for having left baby Beatrice behind.

With more and more time on her hands, and less and less sight of her husband, she was forced to rely on the support of the arcane, chilly world of the palace. In an extraordinary outburst in December 1994 she said that when she married Prince Andrew "I was wandering with no compass, no fixed sense of what to do. It wasn't

that I lacked the will or the ability, I simply did not know what was expected of me." What she should have known was what was not expected of her. She was not expected to wear a maple leaf in her hair on a visit to Canada, or have "LA" imprinted on her hat in Los Angeles. The tabloid press increasingly poked fun at her dress

sense, orange hair and burgeoning girth. They lambasted her decision to go on holiday shortly before the start of hostilities in the Gulf War. She was portrayed as a selfish pleasure-seeking woman who had abandoned her husband, when the truth might equally be said to be that her husband with his naval priorities had already abandoned her.

The duchess's friendship with the Texan oil millionaire Steve Wyatt, and the toe-sucking denouement five months after the Yorks' separation in March 1982 need no rehearsing. More engaging is what has happened since the couple parted and the question: why has divorce taken so long? The Queen and royal household wanted the duchess

ess exiled as soon as possible. That it should have taken four years — giving time for the duchess's growing financial problems and a spate of scandals to hit the headlines — is a source of enormous bitterness within the royal household. As a senior palace aide once let slip to the BBC, Sarah Ferguson was regarded inside palace walls as "unfit" to be a member of the royal family. But the final word was left to an ageing Lord Charteris, the former private secretary to the Queen, who spoke out loud what many had discretely thought when he called her "vulgar, vulgar, vulgar". It is understood the Queen last month sent a letter to Prince Andrew urging him to make a clean break. It was in a similar vein to those sent by the Queen last Christmas to the Prince and Princess of Wales — with, no doubt, the same aim in mind: to draw a line under the marital mess created by her heir and second son, and try and start again. In the case of the Waleses, the three-year lull between separation and the opening of divorce negotiations can be explained by the princess's unwillingness to finalise the split and the prince's sense of decorum. For the Yorks the story is more complicated. They remain great friends, whose boundless affection can be explained by the princess's thoroughness. One suspects that if Prince Andrew had not been wedded to the Navy and if prickly courtiers had not forever been breathing down their necks their marriage could have survived.

Scant sympathy for 'gauche' royal couple in Sloane Square

Berlie Duttler

THERE was scant sympathy last night for the Duchess of York in her natural home, the wine bars and brasseries of London's Sloane Square. "About time, too," chortled revellers, more worried about the froth on their cappuccino than the latest royal marriage debacle. Should Fergie step out again in SW7, newly-divorced, she should prepare herself for a frosty reception. "She's a brat," said Libby Morris, aged 34, a teacher from Twickenham. "She's an embarrassment to the country and she should be cast out. You have to have some sensitivity to the fact that, particularly in a recession, there are poor people around. To go gallivanting around the world and spending money like water is outrageous. Amanda Rigall, aged 26, a student from Middlesex, was equally scathing. "A more gauche couple you could not imagine. They were bad for the country. Terribly lower-middle class. A horrible tabloid version of the British royal family." Marion Greene, aged 42, a teacher from Brighton, described the duke and duchess as "self-interested self-publicists with no sense of their public duty", adding: "They should be put in the tower, both of them." Polly Cutler, aged 18, a student from Twickenham, said: "I see Fergie as the root of all the royal family's problems. Good riddance, I say."

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The only chance of saving the UN is the election of a Secretary General with high personal moral stature, with a fearless record of telling unpopular truths, and with the instincts of a democratic politician. There is an obvious candidate with those qualities and one extra — she's a woman: Mary Robinson, President of Ireland.

Victoria Britain page 9

...fear from 11-off

In their hearts, many of the 5,000 present knew that Prince Charles Edward Stuart had messed up the encounter



Scots pay tribute to the 1,000 slaughtered at Culloden 250 years ago, in a battle which led to the destruction of the old clan system. PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN PAUL

Kilted masses mourn rebellion's bloody end

Peter Hetherington joins the ceremony at Drumossie Moor

THE kilted masses plodded solemnly through knee-deep heather, banners held high and ceremonial broadsword at the ready. At midday, a crackle of musket fire and a lament on the pipes briefly shattered the peace of Drumossie Moor — followed by a minute's silence for the 1,000 slaughtered by Hanoverian military might in the last battle on British soil 250 years ago.

It was meant to be a quiet, dignified commemoration on the northern slope at Culloden, a mass mourning for the bloody end of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion which led to the destruction of the old clan system and a way of life. In their hearts, many of the 5,000 present knew that Prince Charles Edward Stuart had messed up the encounter. His hungry and dejected troops had little suitable ammunition. His choice of ground, for men used to roaring down hill-sides, proved catastrophic. "Culloden, and its vengeful, repressive aftermath, finally called down the curtain on the medieval Highlands," noted the head of the Inverness Gaelic Society, Kenneth Macdonald, standing beside a 30ft high cairn, the battlefield memorial. Tartan and the Gaelic language were banned, and thousands were "cleared" from the land. While wreaths were laid by nationalist republicans,

'Culloden was a devastating blow to our history — it was a very sad, cruel event'

Stuart, seventh Count of Albany. He claims to be a direct descendant of the Bonnie Prince and the rightful King of Scotland.

He came to Scotland 20 years ago and works as a public relations consultant. "I just wanted to come and live here because, well, we belong. People hate exiles." His bodyguard, Jock Robertson, a garage owner from East Lothian, thought too many seemed intent on doing down the Bonnie Prince — with much talk of womanising and drunkenness. "They've been at this propaganda for years."

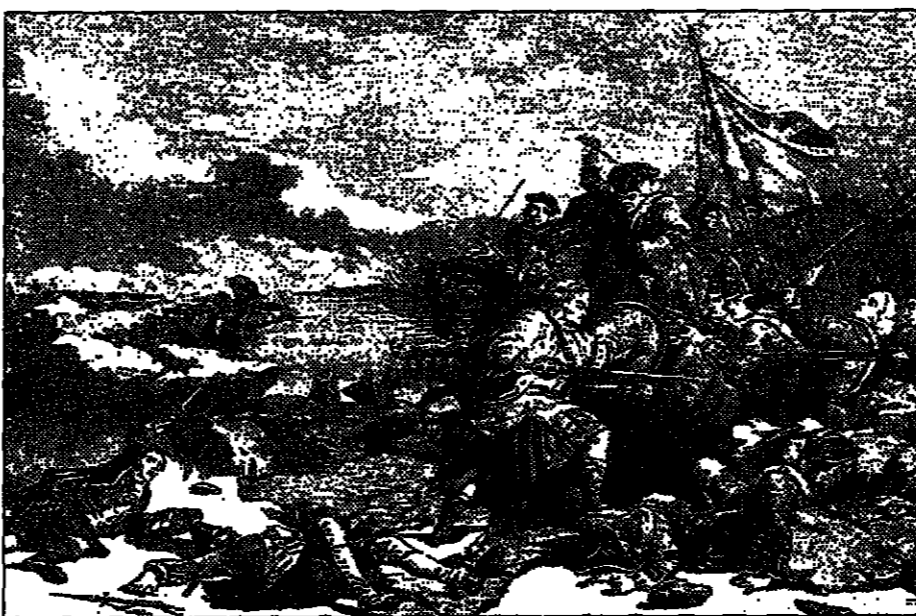
Events moved from the

sombre to the farcical as a lone red coat began wandering around the battlefield. Had Gordon Raynor, a retired engineer from south Cumbria and a military weapons enthusiast, taken leave of his senses?

No. He just wanted to show the flag. "I've got lots of Scottish friends and they respect me," he claimed. Then he reconsidered. "Actually, one or two have called me a bastard today."

And much worse, as it turned out. As he explained his patriotic mission, a kilted Scot interrupted. "You feel comfortable pal, do you? What about all that genocide? Down with all Brits — get out." "It wasn't so much genocide as culture-cide," volunteered Derek Stewart of the White Cockade Society (named after the Jacobite emblem) which re-enacts battle scenes and fired the muskets at midday. "Quite a few Scots fought with that butcher Cumberland. It wasn't all black and white."

Some clan chiefs, with their impeccably clipped English upper class tones, prepared their pipes for a final flourish. Donald MacLaren, from Perthshire, aged 40, head of the Clan MacLaren, in full Highland gear, was typical. "We're not making a political statement. We're not being mawkish about the past, but Culloden was a devastating blow to our history — a very sad, cruel event."



The battle of Culloden, painted by R. R. M'lan

IRA bomber 'laid plans for months'

David Pallister

EDWARD O'Brien, who blew himself up on a bus in central London in February, was an experienced and committed terrorist who had been planning a mainland bombing campaign throughout the period of the IRA ceasefire, an inquest was told yesterday.

Before the visit to Ireland by President Bill Clinton last October, the 21-year-old was collecting intelligence and preparing his bombs in a south London flat, Paul Knapman, the Westminster coroner, was told.

Detective Superintendent William Emerton, of the anti-terrorist branch, said O'Brien was probably responsible for the unexploded bomb placed in a telephone box in the West End of London three days before the Aldwych blast.

The bomb had been placed in a Jaguar holdall, similar to one found in O'Brien's flat. Mr Emerton said that after O'Brien arrived in London from Co Wexford he worked as a labourer and made friends in the pubs and clubs around Lewisham. "But I can prove that from August 1994 O'Brien was in London operating on behalf of the IRA and indulging in criminal activity."

Two witnesses yesterday recalled the shock of the explosion. Constable Miles Manning told the coroner's court there was "an almighty explosion, one of the biggest bangs I have ever heard".

He was hurled to the ground. Picking himself up he ran to the scene. "As I came round the corner there was complete and utter silence. No movement at all."

He saw O'Brien inside the mangled bus. "He looked as if he was sitting on a seat. It was obvious he was dead. His legs had been blown off."

A 9mm Walther pistol lay on the ground.

Paris Valentine, a solicitor, was sitting at the back of the lower deck, reading a book.

"There was a loud thud and a piercing sound going through my mind. Everything became still and I was surrounded by complete darkness and sparks of light passing in front of my eyes." He sustained cuts and a perforated eardrum.

Allen Feraday, the Government's leading forensic expert on bombs, said O'Brien's flat contained 16 one-hour time and power units, four electronic detonators and six 2.5kg blocks of Semtex. He said the bomb could have gone off because of poor design, faulty equipment or possession through electro-magnetic interference.

O'Brien would have died instantly, said Iain West, of Guy's hospital. Besides blowing his legs off the blast collapsed his lungs and lacerated his body with shrapnel. Commander John Grievie, the head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said: "Inquiries are still going on and there are a number of very positive leads."

Returning a verdict of accidental death, the coroner praised members of the public who helped the injured driver and another passenger. Of O'Brien he said: "I would extend sympathy to his family but it is clear that whilst embarking on this potentially murderous crime he was the author of his own misfortune."

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Hogg announces BSE action plan to 'get industry moving' but measures fail to convince those at sharp end of crisis

Beef exports 'will take five years to recover'

Paul Brown on a bleak industry report

THE Government's BSE action plan was drawn up after a report commissioned from the accountants Coopers & Lybrand painted a bleak picture for the future of the industry, worth £2.8 billion a year before the BSE crisis. It says: "There is a genuine crisis in the industry and urgent action is needed."

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Secretary, said yesterday that the immediate task was to get the industry moving again so that beef could get from the farm to the public who still wanted to buy it. This meant removing the "blockages" of stocks in store. To protect farmers from price reductions and stave off a chain of threatened bankruptcies, the Government was prepared to subsidise market prices by up to 25p a kilo until prices regained pre-scare levels.

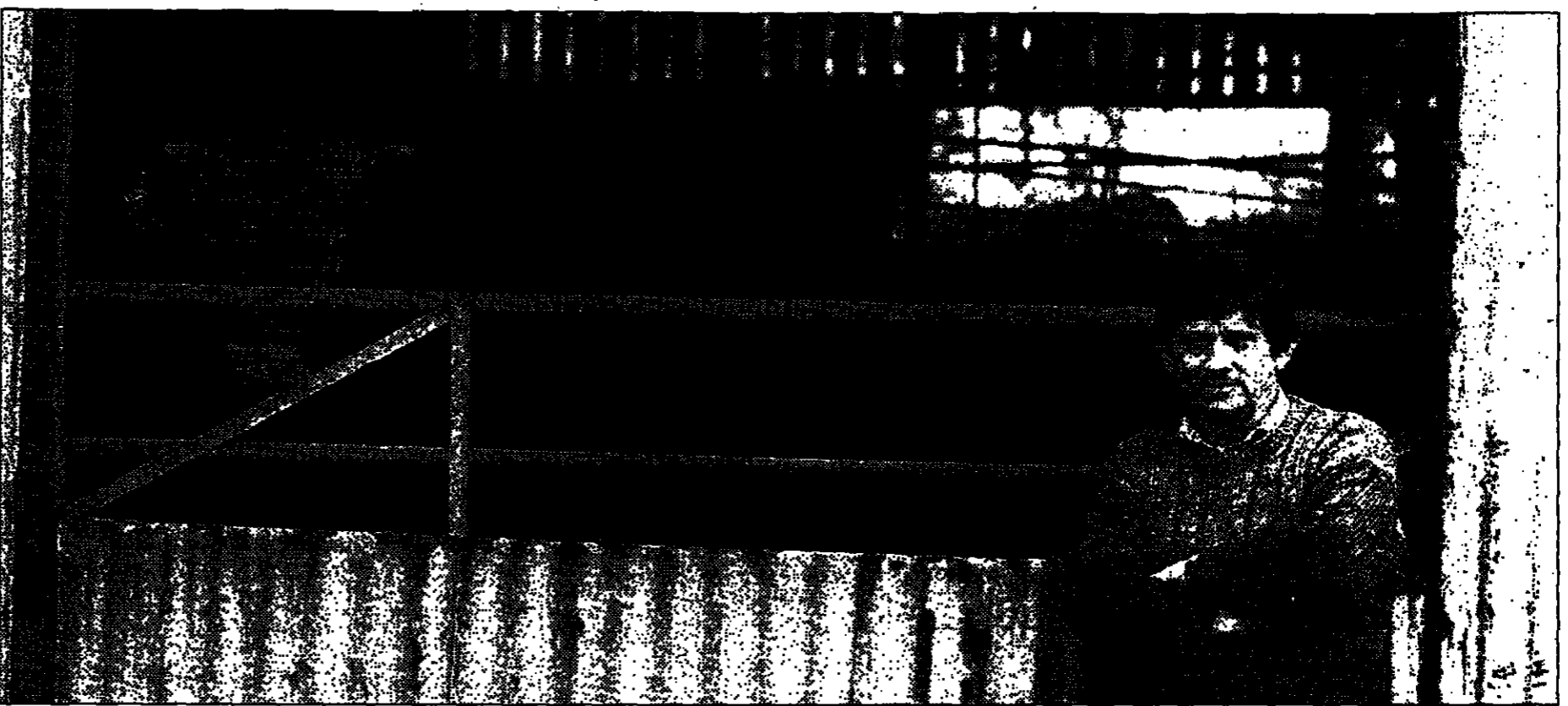
Farmers would be paid compensation of up to £480 an animal for cows too old to go into the food chain, and more for specially bred beef cattle over 30 months old which were now also banned from human consumption. These animals would be slaughtered and sent to the rendering industry, which boils them down into tallow and bone-meat. The industry used to be able to sell these products but had been unable to do so because of fears of spreading BSE. Special disposal methods for this waste would be devised. This special aid to the rendering industry would cost £118 million.

Mr Hogg ruled out any mass slaughtering policy, but said that selective slaughtering of animals most likely to be affected by BSE was still being considered. These would be put to the industry before they were publicly announced, but the number of herds affected would be small and the animals involved would be in the thousands.

Another scheme, to be announced soon, for allowing animals over 30 months back into the food chain was also being formulated. This was for specialist beef herds where there was no BSE and the cattle had been fed on grass and feed which could not have contained any BSE infection. The Coopers & Lybrand report is based on the assumption that current loss of exports would continue for at least six months, and that it was unlikely to fully recover within five years. Farmers would be forced to continue selling cattle, however, and the Government should aim for a much reduced slaughtering and processing industry sufficient to meet demand.

According to the report, lost export revenues for the industry was £10 million a week, which could not be recovered in the short term. There was a further £15 million a week lost in revenue from slaughtering cattle that could no longer go into the food chain. The accountants estimated that the beef industry was already 45 per cent over capacity and, as a result of the crisis, a large number of slaughterhouses and meat processors would have to close. Estimated job losses as a result of the closure of between one quarter and one third of abattoirs was 6,000, and at meat processing plants 15,000 to 20,000. Total losses in the industry might reach 26,000. "The damage to the infrastructure is likely to be huge and unrecoverable in the medium term."

The Country Landowners' Association, which represents 50,000 rural businesses said it believed the Government's measures would put the industry back on its feet. "We agree wholeheartedly with the commitment to no mass slaughter of healthy productive cattle," Ewen Cameron, the president, said.



Edward Wardell with his cattle in Lymm, Cheshire, yesterday, as he ponders Hogg's Commons statement

PHOTOGRAPH CHRIS THOMSON

Minister fails to lift gloomy farmers

As MPs listened to Commons statement, David Ward tested mood in beef industry

AS THE strobing pink jacket of Labour's Harriet Harman gave way to the sober suit and concerned expression of Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, beef farmer Edward Wardell set his video to record the Commons statement and prepared to take notes.

Mr Hogg outlined plans to help farmers, slaughterers, processors and renderers and said: "These should enable the industry to plan ahead with confidence."

Mr Wardell, partner in 150-acre Great Oak Farm at Lymm, Cheshire, did not share the minister's optimism. "I'm disappointed," he admitted. "They appear to be a lot more confident than I am."

He reviewed his notes and concluded that government assistance would apply to only a handful of the farm's 370 cattle.

These animals are over 30 months old and so cannot be sold into the food chain. Now Mr Hogg has promised

a temporary 25p per kilo premium on top of a previously announced 86p per kilo offer of help. "But he has not done anything that would increase the value of all the rest of the cattle under 30 months," complained Mr Wardell. "He seems to hope that market forces will put that right."

Before the Government's announcement of a possible link between BSE and CJD last month, he would buy cattle from markets in Cheshire and Carlisle and feed them up for six months. Each week about 15 fattened beasts would go to an abattoir in Colne, Lancashire, and then on to

the shelves of a major supermarket chain. But for the first three weeks of the new BSE crisis, no cattle left Great Oak Farm and none arrived. "If we couldn't sell, we couldn't buy," Mr Wardell said.

Mr Wardell managed to sell a few bulls last week for about £640 a head, compared with £730 before the scare. He glanced around a shed containing 120 animals. "No bulls of this age have ever been found with BSE. I know people tend to think that farmers are always after something, but, without compensation, the business cannot continue."

What it means on the farm

Tony Evans runs a beef farm in Essex. This is what the measures announced by Douglas Hogg will mean to him.

<p>Beef cows: 50</p> <p>Sold at the end of her working life (ie over 30 months) for meat.</p> <p>Annual EU subsidy per cow: £114.43</p>	<p>Beef calves: 240</p> <p>Sold at market, under 30 months old for meat.</p> <p>EU subsidy claimed per male calf: £93.11</p>		
<p>Price Pre BSE</p> <p>MAXIMUM PER COW</p> <p>£600</p>	<p>Price now</p> <p>MAXIMUM PER COW</p> <p>£480</p>	<p>Calf price pre BSE</p> <p>£400 to £600</p>	<p>New measure:</p> <p>Twenty per cent subsidy on current depressed price, to a maximum of 25p per kg.</p>

CJD deaths from hormone 'were avoidable'

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

THE deaths of young people infected with CJD by treatment with human growth hormone were a "dreadful tragedy" which was avoidable, the High Court was told yesterday.

Robert Owen QC, representing families of eight victims, said they had died aged between 20 and 34 after being injected as children with the hormone, extracted from the pituitary glands of corpses. In all, 16 people, treated with the hormone for abnormally short stature, have died, but half the families are ineligible for legal aid. A 17th is dying.

Mr Owen told Mr Justice Morland that the victims had died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease — the human equivalent of mad cow disease — after receiving treatment between 1958 and 1985, when the programme ended suddenly after the first deaths were reported in the US. Since 1985, genetically engineered hormone has been used.

He said the action against the Medical Research Council, which was responsible for the programme until 1977, and the Department of Health, which took over, would have wide implications. Many of the 1,885 people treated had suffered psychiatric harm and lived with the fear that they might be infected with a fatal disease. The future conduct of their cases depended on the outcome of the trial.

The MRC and the Department of Health deny negligence and say they had no duty of care towards the children. They argue that because of their status as a research body and a government department, it would not be fair to make them liable.

The families allege that the department and the Medical Research Council were negligent in not taking account of evidence since 1968 that CJD was transmissible, in not ensuring that pituitaries from dementia sufferers were screened, and in not using the safest method of extraction. An animal virologist suggested to the MRC in 1977 that no pituitaries from people who had suffered from dementia should be used, but this was not implemented until 1980. The hearing continues.

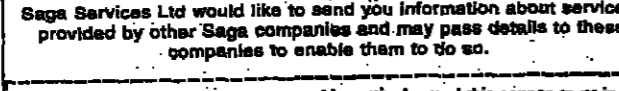
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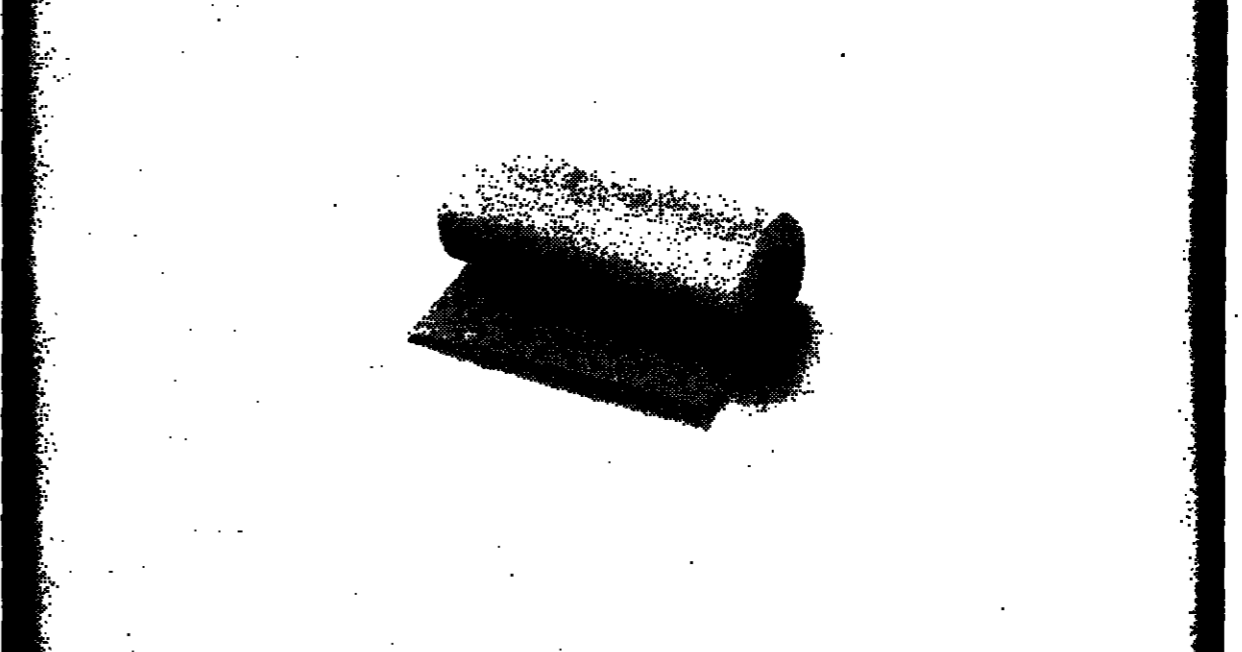
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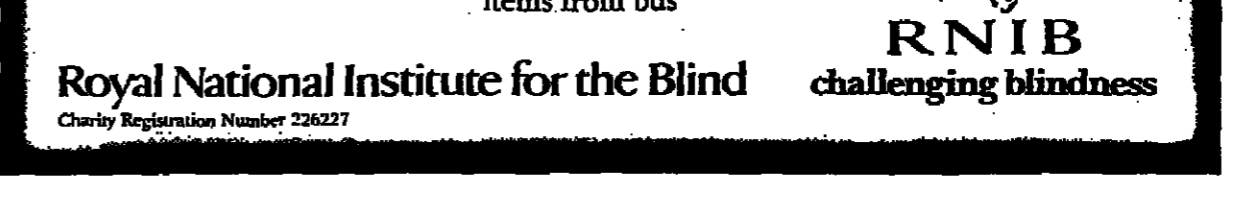
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Clinton administration turns peacemaker as the rumble of war grows fainter

Washington in Lebanon peace push

Martin Walker in Washington and Ian Black in London

THE United States launched an effort yesterday to end the fighting in Lebanon, which has raged for six days. The move was welcomed by Tel Aviv but Beirut said the proposed ceasefire terms were hard to accept.

Rafik al-Hariri, said after talks on the proposed deal with US diplomats in Saudi Arabia: "Our first impression is that there is a difficulty in accepting it."

US's six-point plan to store the grapes of wrath

Lebanon guarantees the security of settlements in northern Israel. Guerrilla attacks against Israeli soldiers inside Israel's security zone in south Lebanon stop in return for an Israeli declaration that it has no demands in Lebanon and is willing to discuss pulling out its forces if the Lebanese army provides security in south Lebanon for nine months.

Israel demands the disarming of Hizbullah and maintains its right to attack the group if it resumed its terrorist activities. Israel takes steps to revive peace negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Mr. Christopher wants to keep open the possibility of a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement on the Golan Heights, having made a big personal investment in such an agreement in 17 visits to Damascus.

were made just hours after many countries had condemned Israel at the United Nations, where Arab countries accused it of "senseless aggression" and the US warned that it would block any resolution condemning the Jewish state.

Hizbullah 'bowing to bombardment'

Derek Brown in Kiryat Shmona and Jessica Berry in Tel Aviv

THE Israeli army reported a "marked decrease" yesterday in the number of rocket attacks launched across its border by Hizbullah in south Lebanon.

due to the activity of the IDF [Israeli defence forces], he said. Their capability to launch attacks has been markedly reduced as a result of precision-guided bombing and other means.



After the storm... A man in Nabatiyeh walks through his shops, which were destroyed by Israeli shelling yesterday, the sixth day of aerial and artillery bombardment of Beirut and south Lebanon. PHOTOGRAPH: KAMEL JABER

Military sources on the border said Operation Grapes of Wrath might end in the next few days, a prediction supported by the increasing diplomatic moves towards a ceasefire.

He denied that Israel was targeting civilians and blamed their deaths on Hizbullah's use of civilian shelters. At least 31 civilians have been killed in Lebanon since the operation started on Thursday.

Yesterday three salvos of Katyusha rockets landed in northern Israel. One hit western Galilee, near the Mediterranean coast, wounding a woman. Two more struck in the Galilee pashanah, close to the town of Kiryat Shmona, whose inhabitants have either fled or seek refuge in bomb shelters.

Hizbullah, under intense Israeli aerial and artillery attack for the past six days, have returned fire with Katyushas on each day of the bombardment, but their firepower is diminishing, according to Israeli military spokesman Colonel Raan Gissin.

News in brief

More than 300 die in Burundi clashes

MORE than 300 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in a wave of Hutu rebel attacks in Burundi in the past two weeks, United Nations sources said yesterday. The dead, they added, included a commando colonel killed on Sunday by more than 100 armed Hutu rebels in a raid on Bukirasazi commune, south of the central town of Gitega.

Economic policy U-turn

VENEZUELAN President Rafael Caldera has announced a sweeping economic adjustment programme that returns the country to the Latin American vogue for free market reform.

Patten blamed for protests

ACOMMUNIST Party organ in Hong Kong yesterday denounced Governor Chris Patten as the "behind the curtain" orchestrator of street protests which it said threatened "social chaos".

Russia seeks talks role

RUSSIA insisted yesterday that it should have a role in negotiations to settle tensions on the Korean peninsula, after the US proposed four-way talks with North and South Korea and China.

Olympic visitors warning

NON-EUROPEAN visitors to the Sydney Olympic Games in the year 2000 should be warned they could be beaten up by police who mistake them for Aborigines, a leading academic said yesterday.

Clintons 'denied justice on Whitewater'

Martin Walker in Washington

PARTISANS of President and Mrs Clinton in the White House have started to counter-attack, claiming that the legal and congressional inquiries are becoming poisoned by Republican politics, as public interest in the affair wanes.

general, claiming that Mr Starr's role denies the Clintons impartial justice, and asking for a review of his role.

after Congress refused to continue funding and authorisation for his special committee on Whitewater.

of his allegation that Mr Clinton, the then-governor of Arkansas, pressured him to make an illegal loan to keep the Whitewater company afloat.

A former solicitor-general in the Bush administration, Mr Starr was appointed to investigate Whitewater by a panel of conservative judges.

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Madonna with child as material girl comes over all maternal

MADONNA, the ranchy sex goddess of the 1980s, has completed her transformation into the matronly star of the film *Evita*, by announcing that she is expecting a baby.

The father is her personal fitness trainer for the last 18 months, Carlos Leon, and the child is due in September — well after the scheduled completion of the \$60 million film of the hit musical.

"We are doing everything possible to accommodate her condition and to keep to the schedule," Alan Parker, the film's director, said.

"She has been splendid throughout, utterly profes-

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Juppé resists drift to National Front hard line

Gaullists split over immigrant policy

Paul Webster in Paris

PARLIAMENTARY proposals to reduce illegal immigrants' access to education and health services have deepened a split inside the Gaullist-led cabinet and raised a storm of protest from human rights organisations.

Rightwing MPs have been accused of trying to compete with the racist National Front, which has stepped up its anti-immigration campaign in the run-up to the 1996 general election.

A recent opinion poll showed 33 per cent of the electorate in favour of the extremist movement's racist programme.

A parliamentary commission's proposals — handed to the prime minister, Alain Juppé, yesterday — reflect tough policies being prepared by the interior minister, Jean-Louis Debré, who plans to ask the national assembly today to approve a bill making it the equivalent of a terrorist offence to shelter an illegal immigrant.

Human rights organisations are preparing a national demonstration in June against what they consider government encouragement of intolerance towards immigrants. But Mr Juppé is among ministers opposing tighter restrictions because he fears a popular backlash against the MPs' demands, which include fingerprinting African visitors.

Le Monde was among newspapers which attacked a rightwing drift towards National Front policies. It said some government party members, paralysed by the growing popularity of Jean-Marie Le Pen's party, were ready to destroy fundamental republican rights to please voters.

The parliamentary commission's chairman, Jean-Pierre Fihberth, a member of the Union for French Democracy (UDF), said MPs wanted 46 changes, including tighter frontier controls, stricter detention conditions and expulsions made easier. The proposed laws would make it difficult for illegal im-

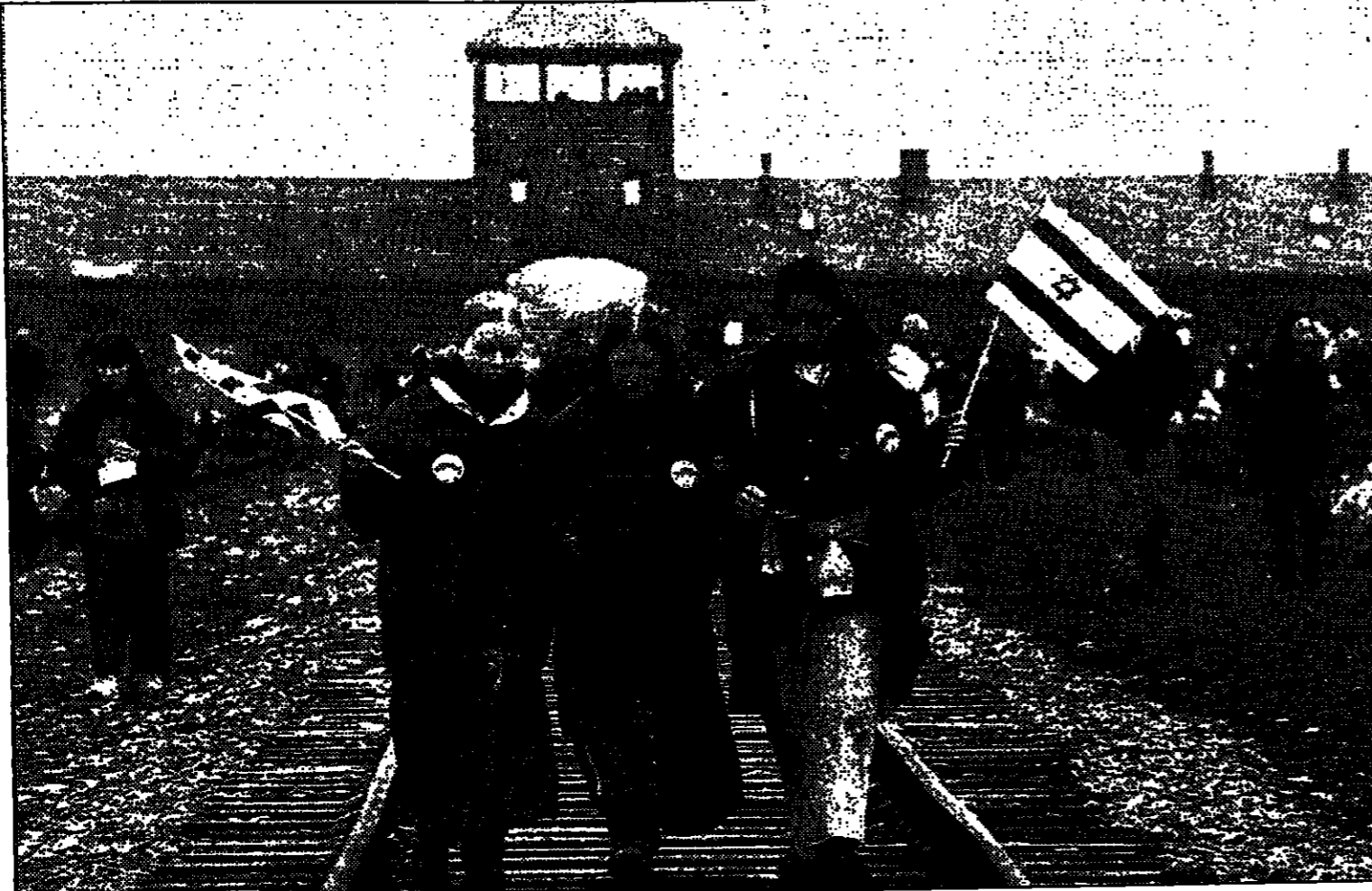
migrants to get hospital treatment, council housing and schooling, and they would no longer qualify for child allowances.

One Gaullist commission member, Alain Marsaud, denied that the commission had based its recommendations on measures soon to be announced by Mr Debré — a fellow Gaullist — but several of the proposals are similar to plans being considered by the interior minister.

One critic of tougher laws is the former interior minister Charles Pasqua, whose 1993 anti-immigration measures have been the subject of continuous protest. He said the laws against illegal immigration were already strong enough but not being fully enforced.

Last year more than 45,000 visitors were declared illegal immigrants and ordered to leave French territory but fewer than 11,000 were eventually expelled, because of bureaucratic delays or appeals.

The total number was almost the same as in 1992.



Committed to memory... Some 6,000 young Jews yesterday commemorated the victims of the Holocaust in the March of the Living, a two-mile walk between Auschwitz and Birkenau, the Nazi death camps in Poland where more than a million people, most of them Jews, died. PHOTOGRAPH: ALIX KEPLAZ

Nato rules out Moscow offer

David Hearst in Riga

JAVIER SOLANA, Nato's secretary-general, yesterday bluntly dismissed a Russian compromise allowing former Warsaw pact countries to join Nato as political rather than fully fledged military members.

Speaking in Lithuania at the start of his tour of Baltic countries, Mr Solana said: "I rule it out because I do not know what it means."

His comments will give fresh impetus to a common approach to full Nato membership being prepared by all three Baltic countries, but will do nothing to ease Russian political concern at the alliance's growing military influence in central and eastern Europe.

The three Baltic states, which once formed the western military flank of the Soviet Union, are eager to exploit the growing east-west rift, believing that they will benefit by it.

Latvia's foreign minister, Valdis Birkavs, said Russia could not claim a right of veto on membership. He said: "Russia can't be ignored, but it is not the right approach to follow only Russia's complaints. We want dialogue, not subordination."

Latvia, which claims a strip of land on its western border occupied by Russia, is awaiting Nato's announcement of its expansion plans. It will not be among the first wave of new members, but the terms of the announcement, the timing and the conditions of entry will help east European states in the queue to know what Nato has in mind.

Dr Birkavs said: "My feeling is that the enlargement process is going a bit slowly, because the understanding of how sophisticated and complex this process is is already there."

He said Latvia understood the dangers of creating a new line of confrontation in Europe but regarded its participation in the Partnership for Peace programme, and its prior presence in Bosnia, as part of its national security.

"No one can give us security guarantees, words that can't be broken, but Nato's enlargement is a process and security is also a process and

we don't want to be outside that process," he said.

He added that without stability in the Baltics there would be no stability in Europe. "Certainly, Nato enlargement is not targeted against Russia, but it is targeted at stability."

In Moscow, however, antagonism towards Nato's expansion is growing. Polish and Hungarian accession to Nato would be unwelcome but tolerated; the Baltics would be a different matter.

Leading Russian military strategists have warned that Moscow could respond by repositioning tactical short-range nuclear missiles on its western borders.

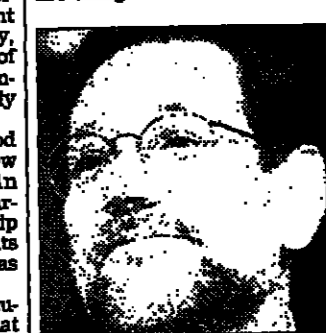
Viktor Mikhailov, Russia's atomic energy minister, has even suggested bombing Czech bases if the republic becomes part of Nato's military infrastructure.

Other Russian military strategists have focused on Nato's use of bases in Hungary for its Bosnia operation.

Russia's conventional armed forces have been weakened by 10 years of reform and the disbandment of some of the fighting units withdrawn from eastern Europe. Russia also feels the loss of its traditional arms market in eastern Europe and is sensitive to Germany's growing economic influence there.

Latvia's relationship with Moscow has been turbulent, complicated by the presence of a large minority of ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and other nationalities to whom it is denying citizenship. Today, Dr Birkavs says, the relationship is "so-so".

He said: "We are working to have better relations and we are being tolerant."



Solana: added to Russian fears of Nato enlargement

Baltics may be losers in move to limit expansion

John Palmer in Brussels

NATO governments are ready to limit the future expansion of the alliance to just three countries in central Europe — the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland — in an effort to overcome Russian objections to enlargement.

In effect, the member governments will indefinitely freeze further Nato enlargement to other central European countries or to the Baltic states.

In return, Nato hopes that whoever wins the Russian presidential election in June will co-operate actively in building a comprehensive collective security order covering the whole continent.

When they meet in Brussels in December, Nato foreign ministers are expected to confirm their intention to move to the next stage of enlargement. Negotiations could begin first with the Czechs and either simultaneously or shortly after with Hungary and Poland, with the prospect of the three becoming full members by the year 2000.

But Nato will insist that it is too soon to consider any further applications from other countries in the region, disappointing the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. They fear that exclusion could send a misleading signal to Moscow.

This week the Finnish prime minister, Paavo Lipponen, warned that an agreement with Russia could split Eastern Europe into apparent pro-Nato and pro-Russian groups. The Finnish government wants to discuss the issues raised by limited expansion with the Nato secretary-general, Javier Solana.

Quite apart from Russian objections to the Baltic states being included, Western governments are concerned about political developments in Slovakia and Bulgaria, and questions regarding minority rights in Romania.

There have been reports that some Slovak and Bulgarian leaders are reconsidering their pro-Nato strategy in favour of closer links with a possible confederation involving Russia, Belarus and some other former Soviet republics.

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A Lilley-livered opt out

Poverty can't be relieved without redistribution

WHO IS the real Peter Lilley? The minister who privately described last year's Treasury cuts to social security — in a memorandum later leaked to the Guardian — as unfair and devastating? Or the social security secretary who has just publicly told the British anti-poverty lobby that the Government has no intention of taking part in the current International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, even though as a signatory of the UN's Copenhagen Declaration it committed itself to setting targets to reduce inequality? Peter Lilley is not the first minister to deny poverty exists in Britain. A predecessor, the hapless John Moore, adopted the same tactic in 1988 shortly before Margaret Thatcher sacked him. Thatcher herself in the same year insisted "everyone in the nation has benefited from increasing prosperity — everyone" only to be humiliated by her own Government's statistics in the following year.

Lilley is right when he insists the bottom 20 per cent have acquired more consumer goods over the last decade. No one can pretend that life for the bottom 20 per cent is as desperate as it was 100 years ago. The General Household Survey shows that about three out of four have telephones, central heating — and almost a half a car. But he is wrong to suggest this exempts the UK from the obligations of the Convention. It specifically calls on states to draw up national strategies for the reduction of poverty — both absolute and relative. And for good reason, as the growth of poverty in Britain demonstrates.

Inequality in the UK has grown further and faster than in any comparable state during the last decade: the poorest 30 per cent have all suffered, the poorest 10 per cent are actually 17 per cent worse off in real terms, while the income of middle-earners has grown by 35 per cent and high-earners by 50 per

cent. The result is an almost unbelievable tripling of people in poverty as defined by the European Union: people living below half the national average. One out of every three children is now growing up in such poor families. Do not be misled by the consumer durables. Children in these families suffer multiple handicaps: poorer education, less training, more unemployment and worse health. Children born in poor families die eight years earlier than their contemporaries in more affluent homes. Even health ministers, who resisted the statistics for so long, now concede a link between poverty and ill health.

There is nothing wrong with the emerging political consensus on what needs to be done: improved training opportunities; better benefit-to-work schemes; more in-work income support schemes. What is wrong is the way the Government breaches the principles which it purports to support and the Opposition prevaricates over its proposals. David Brindle sets out on page nine of our Society supplement how far short the present systems fall. It has been made worse by the budget freeze on one-parent benefit (one benefit which can be carried from unemployment to work), new restrictions on housing benefit for under 25-year-olds (restricting their readiness to move to work), and an imbecilic rule under which the unemployed are denied benefit if they start a training course exceeding 21 hours a week. Eighteen months after Labour's National Commission on Justice reported, the party is still searching for solutions. Its new spokesman, Chris Smith, is conducting a second review looking at 45 possible changes. Just how they will be financed is a further mystery. Better economic growth will help, but ultimately redistribution will be needed if inequalities are to be reduced.



Letters to the Editor

On receiving Short shrift

AM sure that I am not the only person to be saddened by the shabby treatment Clare Short has received from Tony Blair's backroom bootboys. Ms Short made an off-the-cuff remark with which, I reckon, most Labour supporters and MPs agreed. On the other hand, when Harriet Harman did something which most Labour supporters and MPs opposed, she got cotton wool protection — a contradiction which devalues the Blair project.

Richard Cohen, Clare, New Labour needs a conscience. Tony Sampson, 9 Doulton Gardens, Poole, Dorset.

CLARE Short may not have been confined to a Siberian power station, but she has been silenced just as draconianly for the merest mention of an Old Labour point of view on taxation. This episode raises again the question: what will the Blairite faction do in office if they succeed in being elected on a platform of Majoritarianism Major? Where are the concrete policies that would give muscle to the vague sounding aspirations that still occasionally get a mention amid New Labour's rhetoric extolling entrepreneurship, the minimum state and obedience to the global economy?

J Wilfred Attenborough, 6 Spital Street, Lincoln LN1 3EG.

IT would help if the main political parties were able to agree, in advance of the next election, on what constitutes a "middle income". A suitable figure might be Clare Short's salary of £24,000. Then the electorate could vote Labour or Conservative according to whether he or she earns less or more than this figure.

Tom Ashton, 60 Whitworth Drive, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Notts NG12 2ER.

CLARE Short runs true to form. In 1975 I attended a course at the Civil Service College at which Clare Short was also a participant. I well remember her telling us other civil servants that we were all paid too much. This, as may be imagined, went down like a lead balloon.

Jan Gowans, 8 Zwaluwenlaan, 3080 Teruren, Belgium.

IF words mean anything, a "middle income" ought to mean an income around average earnings. The most conservative estimates of Ms Short's income, based on her parliamentary salary and widow's pension, give a figure of about £40,000, which is comfortably more than twice average earnings.

What reason can there be for calling this a "middle income", unless perhaps it is similar to that of Guardian journalists who want to consider themselves just an ordinary Joe or Josephine? Alan Harrison, 16, Baslow Road, Slough SL1 1JG, Walsall WS3 3SG.

ROSE Coward quotes Yvonne Roberts as asking "what, in the 90s, is a father for?" (Make the father figure, April 12). One could also ask "what is a mother for?" Once a child has been born, neither of its biological parents is necessary. Children survive the death of their mothers as well as the departure of their fathers. Adoption works.

The mothers versus fathers argument is sterile and diversionary. Men and women are different and complementary. Children benefit from learning, understanding and celebrating this at first hand.

The problem is that men and women are not valued as equals — but we won't redress the imbalance by denigrating fathers, any more than by scapegoating single mothers. Lawrence Greenberg, 12 The Fairway, London N14 4NY.

BEA Campbell (Good ride-dance to the patriarch, April 16) states that the backlash against the Child Support Agency was created by "men who won't cough up for their kids".

In fact, the CSA was not conceived as a maintenance-providing measure. It was nothing more than a cruel and cynically marketed form of taxation upon a very vulnerable section of society. Bruce Lidington, Chairman, Families Need Fathers, 134 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3AR.

THE IPPR conference to which Rose Coward refers is not the first on the subject. Glasgow was the venue for Father Figures in 1994, organised by the Association for the UN International Year of the Family. That conference included a consultant from the Equal Status Council in Denmark — a country which has formulated policies enabling and encouraging fathers to share responsibilities, such as parental leave.

Significantly, the Glasgow conference began on the day that the UK blocked a draft EU directive on parental leave. The same week, the Government put forward proposals to impose fines of £1,000 on the parents of persistent young offenders. Social-policy-makers

CAMPBELL is right to say that what women want from men is simply cooperation. Parenting is a shared responsibility and mothers and fathers are going to be at least equal to men as breadwinners then it will become incumbent upon all of us in the future to initiate our children into adulthood as well as change their nappies. Russell Celyn Jones, 45 Reddon Road, London N8 7HL.

Mirror, Mirror on the screen . . .

Tell us — which is the fairest political party of them all?

FEW DECISIONS by Labour have been driven by such naked self-interest as its sudden conversion to loosening the controls on cross-media take-over bids. The party which last year extolled the virtues of plurality now wants the Broadcasting Bill's clause banning newspapers with more than 20 per cent of national readership from owning television franchises to be lifted to 25 per cent. The reason is disarmingly simple. A 20 per cent threshold would allow the Tory Mail and Express groups to move into television while debarring the Labour-leaning Mirror Group whose existing 23 per cent market share already exceeds the limit.

Labour may be doing the right thing for the wrong reason. In other areas of commerce monitored by the Monopolies Commission, the definition of a monopoly is 25 per cent of a market. If Labour had merely argued for a level playing field then its conversion might have been easier to justify. But it did not. Mindful of how the Sun newspaper was credited with swinging the last election in favour of the Conservatives, it is hoping to change the rules to strengthen — and/or curry favour with — the Mirror Group. But hang on. If the Sun did swing it for the Tories then it was through editorial crusading not because of anything Mr Murdoch did through his television interests. Labour surely isn't hoping that a Mirror media empire would exert political influence on its television output. That would be unacceptable. If it is thought that the

Mirror would simply be financially stronger through owning a television station then that's one thing but there is nothing special about television since expansion into other industries could be equally rewarding. If the idea is to use a television channel to promote the Mirror in a way that wouldn't be open to another company then that smacks of unfair competition which ought to be investigated. The truth is that the benefits of cross-media ownership, stripped of cross-promotion, are not obvious.

Academic research shows that most mergers are done for defensive reasons or because they are fashionable (like banks buying estate agents) and hardly any actually produce benefits. This is now happening in the media. Remember that one of the driving forces behind the Broadcasting Act is to create stronger multi-media companies capable of becoming global corporations. So far there is scant sign that this is happening. The Mirror's freedom to take over a television company ought to be judged not by whether it will ensure its loyalty to Labour (which could easily backfire anyway) but whether it will be successful in its own right. Interestingly, Labour's competition policy proposes that large mergers should not be allowed unless the company making the take-over can demonstrate that it is not being done for purely defensive reasons and that positive benefits will emerge. It is a moot point whether any of the current crop of cross-media mergers would pass Labour's own test.

2000: a birth oddity

I'VE always understood that four years are nominally dated from Jesus's birth, but that Jesus was probably born around 4-6 BC. Going by the dates in the Bible for Mary discovering she was pregnant, plus weather conditions in Richard Cohen's book with lambs around a manger, might this mean that the millennium breaks sometime in the next few weeks? If Mary was a few weeks pregnant before she knew, could it be today?

R J Johnson, 17 London Road, Alton GU34 4EG.

IN your article about Jeffrey Archer (Archer rivals, April 11), you quote from last year's biography by Michael Crick that I am "slightly irritated" that my editorial role has not been fully acknowledged. This is not true and I have told Michael Crick as much. Richard Cohen, 7 Manchester Square, London W1M 0RE.

JEFFREY Archer claims to have invented a new literary genre, the "novelography". Let me suggest an alternative term — "biogrovell". Andrew Barrow, 61 Bristol Road, Southsea PO4 9QH.

DR Pointon's suggestion (Letters, April 12) that mobile-phone users should be restricted to one carriage per train is sensible. But of much greater benefit would be to restrict parents with under-fives to one carriage; their offspring make far more noise. Drowning out the noise of crying babies and over-excited toddlers is one of the main reasons I use a Walkman on trains. Jon Harley, Coventry CV5.

YOU claim that 2.5 billion people watched the latest outpourings of Billy Graham (Home news, April 15). Was any detailed thought given to this remarkable, patently absurd claim? Does half the world's population even have access to television? Ian Johnston, 5a Alvanley Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1DU.



The hard stuff (snigger)

WHY Smith's proposal to allow newsgroups to "opt out" of selling sex magazines, and your editorial suggestion (Don't mention "adult" magazines, April 13) to restrict their sale to sex shops, are forms of censorship. Britain does not have a large enough network of sex shops to compensate for the massive loss of retail outlets. Sex shops are also subject to punitive licensing restrictions designed to inhibit their existence. Both suggestions would make it more difficult to reach female, gay and sexual-minority readers: the typically British embarrassment of buying a sex magazine would be far greater in a visit to a sex shop than to a newsagent. Your editorial's smug "out of sight, out of mind" tone neither solves these problems nor guarantees the rights of those who wish to read sex magazines: it reinforces the idea that the British prefer reading Hot Water Bottles Weekly to sex. D Cameron, Upper Newton, Liverpool L1.

WHY do you refer to pornographic magazines as "adult"? As an adult myself, I object. Anne Dickinson, Strubbery Road, Worcester WR1.

Animal harm

WE seem to have a sudden wave of compassion amongst some farmers and vets. Bob Stevenson, the BVA's president, said that he could not condone a mass culling of older cattle on moral and scientific grounds, and the farmers called his stand a "breath of fresh air". Why have neither felt the same compassion for the millions of animals they have been sending to the veal crates?

When will consumers realise that if they were willing to spend a few pennies more and demand cruel-free meat, they will get it? Let's get rid of the dealers and let the real farmers and the real vets in. Carla Lane, Broadhurst Manor, Forest Keynes, near Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Grilled not fried

COULD the Robin Day regretting the liberties taken by his successors be the same man who famously told Roy Hattersley to "chuck it" and who advised Sir John Nott that he was a "here today, gone tomorrow politician"?

When sight of a general election politician will be posturing and lying their way through every radio and TV studio. That is why the vigorous interviewing of John Humphrys, Jeremy Paxman et al are going to be essential. I look forward to hearing all those politicians who claim to speak for "the British people" tested to the full. Meanwhile, Sir Robin Day is best left in retirement. Or on satellite TV. Peter Denton, 1 Sunnyside Road, Toddington TW11 0RP.

Mad cow syndrome subsides

Irrational panic is over but lessons still need to be learned

IF A week is a long time in politics, then four weeks in politics can seem like a whole era. Four weeks ago today the health secretary Stephen Dorrell stood up in the House of Commons to make his ill-fated statement on the link between BSE in cattle and the incidence of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans. How long ago it seems. Yesterday the agriculture secretary Douglas Hogg came in with the interim bill — an aid package for farmers and slaughterers worth at least £550 million. It's not over yet, but this is a sure sign that the mad cow month is beginning to end.

Mr Hogg painted a picture of substantial reconstruction. Cattle sales are nearing 60 per cent of their pre-crisis levels and beef consumption is back to roughly 85 per cent of what it was a month ago. The likelihood of a wholesale cull of all British beef cattle, an option that was being seriously canvassed at the height of the crisis, has all

but disappeared. Even so, \$550 million is an expensive month's loss on the public spending account by anyone's reckoning.

The beef crisis will echo on for months and years, and not just financially. Those who have had to deal with it say it has been the worst experience of their political lives. But there is a danger that the affair will come to be seen in some quarters as an irrational spasm whose only lesson is that the public are easily misled. That would be a very big mistake. There are lessons to be learned from the beef crisis on all sides, but the most important is about the vulnerability of public confidence in the food industry. Human ingenuity is doing things to the food chain whose results we have barely begun to understand, politically as well as biologically. The beef crisis is not a crazy aberration and, unless we take real care, it could be the shape of other crises to come.

Israelis under bombardment

AS IN 1993, the general international reaction to Operation Grapes of Wrath seems predisposed to legitimise the Israeli position (Letters, April 16). Here we have a defensive operation employing only pinpoint strikes against the "terrorists", while avoiding collateral damage (slaughtered civilians) wherever possible. If not actually members of Hizbullah, the villagers of south Lebanon are surely lending their tacit support to the enemies of peace? If wounded women and children are reckless enough to ride in a Hizbullah ambulance, how can the Israeli gunners know this?

The net effect is to dehumanise, and demonise, an entire people. Richard Sockett, 263 Gladstone Avenue, London N22.

THE Israeli attack on an ambulance must surely be regarded as an outrageous breach of international agreements such as the Geneva Convention. The only possible mitigation would be if they had reasonable grounds for believing that the ambulances were being used for carrying out military operations. David Mellor, 71 Maxwell Road, Paisley PA1 2RB.

ASK and ye shall receive, Colin Adams of Artillery Row (Letters, April 15): Michael Portillo is in Israel, sanctioning the bombardment of Lebanon while fingering his arms brochure. If, on his return, he is too busy to "help identify potential work for all areas of the public sector", I can tell him, gratis, that the village of Hiniych needs a couple of ambulances for the next generation of kids to be murdered in, and I believe there's a possibility of some building work in Tyre soon. Got in there quick and you could satisfy both sides. Simon Wood, 4 West Dean, Nr Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 1AJ.

A Country Diary

THE WREKIN: She was watching me long before I saw her. She seemed part of a branch, close against the trunk of a large beech overlooking the edge of wet woodland at the southern end of the Wrekin. Her plumage echoed all the colours of the wood: the oak's rich tannin, the alder's russet, the birch's dusty silver. The dark yew shadow of her eyes fixed me with a deep enclosing silence. Although I've looked into the gaze of an owl before, it's always a moment of transfixed stillness. This stillness unless submerged threads of mood and feeling, just as she united earthly fertility and underworld ghostliness for those who trod this path through spring woods thousands of years before me. Her face appears in neolithic mother-goddesses. She was the Indo-European prototype of the classical Minerva. She was venerated by early Celtic cults. And then she vanished into the twilight of legend and superstition. To the Scots she became the night-hag. To the Welsh aeryn y corff — corpse bird. She was Bloeddwedd who killed her husband, the god Lleu, and was turned into an owl. Suddenly her head spun round to face the wood and I realised that she had been watching me from the centre of her back. Her wings opened and with a few crushing silent beats she was gone. Tawny wings into the tawny wood. She left behind that stillness which even spring birdsong couldn't break. Her plumage colours scattered into the trees. The mire wood of her vanishing is silver of alder, birch and holly growing from a sedge swamp where spring water oozes from the bottom of the hill to begin a journey south through wooded dingles to the river Severn. In these woods, just as the flush of life is being drawn from dark mud, the owl's silence holds that deeply buried knowledge that Spring is both sex and death. PAUL EVANS

سكنا من الامل

Diary
Matthew Norman

THERE is a scene in 1894 in which Winston's perception of the truth (the number of fingers held up) is altered by the huge electric current running through his brain. Did something similar once distort Peter Hitchens' ability, psychiatrists ask themselves today, to comprehend his own facial hair? Following last month's "You the Jury" vote, the London Evening Standard has published an article declaring that the moustacheless beard—as also worn by Solihull and Big Ears—is now officially known as "the Hitchens". The piece says that "nothing at all can rehabilitate the man with a moustacheless beard in his post," and concludes equally starkly: "The Hitchens is a mark of strangeness. There can be no mercy for its wearers." And still, would you believe, the Express's top cleric Blair-hunter denies it. "I can't confess to it because it's not true," he says. "You can tell a lie a hundred times, and it doesn't make the truth." Oh dear. Winston Smith learned to love Big Brother, but is there any way Peter Hitchens can be taught to love the beard to which he has now given his name?

THE annual Queen's Awards for Exports has just arrived. What a pity it is "strictly embargoed" until Sunday, and that we are unable to mention that the very first company on a list of over 100 is Anglo Beef Processors Ltd.

THE Daily Mail has been busy in Mandy Mandel's camp because he spent Easter in the Far East. All the business-class flights between Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, and the nights at five-star hotels, cost £5,000. The Mail's very sweetly picked up for Mandy by Barclays Bank. Mandy went, he says, to promote those already faded trading links between the Far East and Hartlepool. As if sacrificing Easter in Hartlepool looking after constituents were not agony enough, Mandy now has to endure the Mail's scorn. So what if neither Mandy's office nor Barclays Bank can supply an itinerary? They simply mislaid them, that's all, and the moment one turns up and is faxed over, I will be delighted to see the report straight by publishing the full list of Mandy's business meetings in the East.

MANY thanks to Prince Edward for nailing the pernicious lie about Britain and class. "We are forever being told we have a rigid class structure," he tells the most excellent Andrew Duncan of the Radio Times. "That's a load of codswallop." Indeed so, Your Royal Highness, and how splendid to see that least a sliver of "constitutional experts", Lord Sin Gent of Fawning, locking you up on this one. Meanwhile, among a series of talks planned for the summer by Prince Edward's sociology think tank, highlights include the Sultan of Brunei on "Poverty? What Poverty?" and the Duke of Westminster's three-part series, "Up By The Bootstraps: Pulling Oneself Out Of The Slums".

It is his bid to reassure the self-employed that there is nothing to fear about the new system of tax returns, the Inland Revenue has produced a booklet. Self-Assessment: A General Guide explains that dealing with figures is easy—as easy, you might say, as counting from one to 20. Let's have a quick practice using the booklet's page numbers. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (see how easy this is!), 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 18, 17, 18, 19, 20. Match this standard on a self-assessed tax return and you might even win the special bonus prize of a couple of months with Her Majesty the Queen.

MICHAEL Winner: a correction. It was wrongly stated in the Guardian yesterday that Mr Michael Winner, the food critic and sports pundit, directed the controversial sci-fi movie Robocop. Robocop was a huge critical and commercial success, and we apologise unreservedly to Mr Winner for suggesting that he was involved in making it.



Testing market for the middle classes

Commentary John Gray

WHAT does it mean to be middle class nowadays? Last week, in an interview for the Today programme, John Prescott observed that, though his social origins are working class, he is middle class now because he is a Member of Parliament. Contrary to some rightwing media comment, Mr Prescott's statement expresses an eminently reasonable view. We all know that it is the sort of job one has that determines whether or not one counts as a paid-up member of the middle classes. The trouble is that we all know, too, that this is not what they used to be. The sense that most of us

have that our economic lives are riskier than they were in the past is not simply waxy about the prospect of unemployment. It is the fear that, though unemployment may be lower in Britain than in the rest of Europe, jobs as we have known them are becoming steadily rarer. What gives a sharp, nervous edge to insecurity among people who think of themselves as middle class is not the prospect of long-term unemployment. For most of them that is still remote. It is the dim perception that the middle classes as a whole are being casualised. The casualisation of the working lives of people who consider themselves middle class has many sources. Partly, no doubt, it is a result of new-right policies, which have long been based on Bernard Shaw's ignorant grip that all professions are conspiracies against the laity. The governments of both Thatcher and Major have waged an unrelenting—and largely successful—war against the ethos of the pro-

fessions. For schoolteachers, prison officers, social workers, civil servants, people in the armed services and many others, this has meant a morale-destroying regime of market-testing, performance-related pay and continuous monitoring. Along with the deformation of the professions by government-sponsored managerialism has come a vast expansion of contract work. It is this that gives the best clue to middle-class angst. For what this does is to erode the structure given to life by a career that need to define the middle classes in Britain. A normal bourgeois life was one in which the phases of a career tracked the stages of the life-cycle. Moreover it was a career that gave many people their most enduring sense of themselves. The whittling away of the institu-

tion of the job by the growth of contract work tends to make working life fractured and, for many people, permanently provisional. It extends into the lives even of high earners the anxious, speculative and reckless psychology that arises from the impossibility of long-term planning. The decline of job-holding in a deregulated labour market tends unavoidably to weaken and transform the inherited bourgeois culture of work. It pushes middle-class people into a new version of the old market for dock workers in which they were hired and fired by the day. Under these pressures, middle-class people become day-labourers whose only asset is their

Their incomes are so unpredictable, they cannot easily save, take out a mortgage or plan for a pension

skills. In an ironic inversion of the confident forecasts of countless sociology textbooks, the middle classes find themselves closer to the condition of working people a generation or more ago. They are being integrated into a working class that new-right policy has re-proletarianised. The former middle classes are emerging from this experience as carriers of a high-

Was Clare Short right to speak out? No, argues Donald Dewar, who demands a united front against the Tories; but Tony Benn, below, takes a more relaxed view

Don't rock the roll

LAST week was a success story for Labour. The by-election was even a better than expected. It left Tory claims of political and economic recovery in tatters—the bluster of a tired and discredited party that has lost its way. Tony Blair's visit to the United States was a huge event. From Wall Street to the White House, here was a man seen as the next prime minister, not because the polls said he would be, but because the arguments and policies he put forward suggested that he should be. The sight of Tony Blair on the steps of the White House, reacting to the hysteria that had been heard in Labour supporters everywhere. We were on a roll.

The roll continued as Brian Jenkins took his seat. The government was rocked by the anger over its handling of the rail sell-off and the sweeteners that went with it. There is little point in denying that matters were then complicated by the publicity, often mischievous, over Clare Short's remarks on a Sunday morning TV programme watched by journalists with column inches to fill and a desperate need for news.

A good deal of nonsense has since been said and written about what members of the shadow cabinet can and cannot say about Labour's policies. Some newspapers have tried to argue that itself. They see authoritarian leadership cracking down on brave and honest souls who dare to speak the truth. This is not so.

There are two distinct issues of substance. The first is tax policy. Gordon Brown has set out the principles of which Labour will build. He has defined long-term priorities. Labour wants to introduce a new entry-point to the tax system, lower than the present 20p, which will be paid by all. The Tories are committed to abolishing inheritance and capital-gains tax to help the few. The contrast is stark. At this stage of course we cannot give detailed figures about the immediate arithmetic, but then the Chancellor can't predict the contents of his next Budget. When we do, the proposals will be put forward in an open and honest way, in marked contrast to the



This is not a new repression built by experience over time and applying to all parties. As early as 1883 Gladstone was gently rebuking Joe Chamberlain for getting out of line with agreed policy, arguing that remarks that ran this risk and dealt with subjects of high politics otherwise delicate matters "should be made as rarely and reservedly and, if I may say so, as reluctantly as possible".

Members on the front bench are the party's front-line ambassadors and must put the party's case at all times. They must inevitably make decisions and must be able to trust colleagues to stand by them. The idea that collective responsibility in government is somehow different to collective responsibility in opposition is a nonsense. The proposition that cabinet ministers implement policy whereas opposition shadow-cabinet members formulate it is a distinction without merit. Labour is a government-in-waiting. It follows we must behave like a government-in-waiting.

If every member of the front bench expressed personal views when they differed from the agreed collective line, the result would be constant and unnecessary divisions, chaos and political damage. This is not an argument about "free" speech. It is not a question of anyone being "gagged". It is a consequence of collective responsibility which every member of the shadow cabinet accepts.

In recent years discipline and good order have become Labour's hallmarks. The Tories have been divided by incompetence and civil war. As the election nears, these standards of discipline must be maintained. Every member of the present shadow cabinet accepts and understands that. The wider party understands it too. We are in a fight with a political article by Margaret Spillane in the Nation magazine in New York — The Case For Mary Robinson As UN Secretary-General. Photocopies are circulating in drives in the UN building, where morale is at rock-bottom after a heavy dose of job cuts to stave off the financial crisis. Even senior officials admit privately that maybe the Secretary-General is part of the organisation's problem.

In Britain, faxed copies of the Nation article were circulated. There has been of late a refusal, which is no doubt politically convenient, to ignore the distinction between back- and front-bench responsibilities. The latter brings opportunities, of course, but also restraints which are necessary if cabinet government is to work.

Labour morale slumped and the Tories won a landslide. Maybe the shadow Budget presented in 1992 was also a mistake because as Chancellor of the Exchequer can decide what has to be done until he gets into the Treasury and opens the books. But political leaders have to have some confidence in the public, who know quite well that if you want decent public services, they have got to be paid for — and the only fair basis of taxation is the ability to pay.

The argument of that simple principle, with courage and commitment, would be more likely to win support than briefing journalists against people who have the commonsense to say it. If public confidence in democracy is to survive, the electors have got to believe that when their leaders speak, they are speaking their minds and not having their texts vetted in advance to be sure that they never step out of line, or go against the trends of the latest opinion polls.

The Rt Hon Tony Benn is MP for Chesterfield

The woman who should run the UN



Victoria Britain

AFTER a week in which war has plunged the civilian population of two countries — Lebanon and Liberia — into the miseries of sudden death, displacement and hunger, while the United Nations has displayed not one whit of moral leadership, it is time to say that the leader of the world body, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, must not get the second term of office he is secretly campaigning for.

The UN after 50 years is in an unprecedented crisis of cash and credibility. It will be bankrupt in August without a change of policy by the US, which owes \$1.5 billion. The only chance of saving the UN is the election of a Secretary-General with high personal moral stature, with a record of fearless telling of unpopular truths, and with the instincts of a democratic politician. There is an obvious candidate with those qualities and one extra — she's a woman, Mary Robinson, President of Ireland.

Under the byzantine and undemocratic practices of the UN, the Secretary-General is appointed by a consensus of the Big Five in the Security Council: the US, UK, France, Russia and China. There is no open campaign, and there is a gentlemen's agreement that no Secretary-General who wants a second term should be denied it.

Boutros Ghali, whose term ends on December 31 this year, has not said he's running again, but it is an open secret that he wants to. As the consummate diplomat who has never offended anyone in power in his life (except for one uncharacteristic spat with US ambassador Madeleine Albright), this highly educated, multi-lingual Rwandan goes to the heart of why he must be replaced.

Boutros Ghali comes from a culture too polite and passive to deter killers who have seen the impunity with which force is used from Chechnya to Rwanda. Mrs Robinson came to lead Ireland from a background as a lawyer known for fighting for civil liberties for the least represented communities: the poor, women, unemployed people and travellers. She has turned a personal job into one in which she has set new agendas for justice and tolerance. The UN needs such a visionary who could, by her very appointment, break down the cynicism and hopelessness which now symbolise the world body's failure.

Tricks of the cabinet trade

THE highly publicised rebuke to Ron Davies for his comments on the Prince of Wales and the heavy press-briefing against Clare Short for even suggesting that taxation might need to be raised under a Labour government have been justified on the grounds that collective cabinet — and shadow cabinet — responsibility is an integral part of the British constitution and must be upheld at all costs.

It all began because ministers wanted to protect themselves against the king on the basis that it is better "to hang together than to hang separately". Nowadays it is a totally arbitrary rule which almost all party leaders try to impose on their colleagues in order to give the impression that they are in charge and their writ runs across their whole party. They argue that any hint of disagreement will provide an opening for the press or our political opponents, or both, to suggest that the party is

split and hence unfit for government. In fact, collective cabinet responsibility is a very flexible concept, as came out when Mrs Thatcher put a parliamentary question to Jim Callaghan in June 1977 and the Prime Minister replied: "I certainly think that the doctrine should apply except in cases where I announce that it does not."

During the 1975 referendum, the Labour cabinet reached an agreement to differ which allowed ministers to take both sides in that debate, but as it was all done with courtesy, the same cabinet could come together afterwards and continue to work as effectively as it had done before. Everybody knows that there are deep divisions on Europe today, in all parties. Indeed, the loyalty of the supporters of all parties is party based on the fact that each is aware that their own view will be reflected in discussions that take place in both the cabinet

and the shadow cabinet. Democracy is about representation and discussion, and open debate is much preferable to the leaking and briefing which fuels the media with speculation on usually round personalities who are projected as being perpetually at each other's throats. Ministers are elected — and appointed — because of their convictions, not in spite of them. People must trust those in Parliament, and in the leadership of the parties, to hold to what they believe and to act as representatives, champions and educators as well as mere managers, or would-be managers, within a party machine.

We are often told that MPs should be more than party hacks. But if they express an independent view, they are regularly denounced as extremists and wreckers trying to destroy their party and its prospects of victory. Having lived through — and survived — all the at-

tempts made by successive party leaders to impose the tightest possible discipline on their cabinet colleagues, I learned that there were ways of saying what had to be said that kept just within the rules.

One was to look a long way ahead — perhaps 10 or 20 years — and suggest that, at some stage, it would be necessary to consider this or that alternative. Another was to report sympathetically the views of people that needed to be taken seriously even if it might imply a misdirection for government policy. In these ways, if all personal criticism was avoided, the debate could be moved on from the rather stale recapitulation of an official position that appeared to allow no amendment.

The argument about taxation that is now going on touches on a very important aspect of this very problem, and one I remember from the 1959 General Election when I was advising Hugh Gaitskell. Labour was doing very well until Gaitskell gave a pledge at the end of September that there would be no income-tax increases if Labour was elected.

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10 OBITUARIES

Maggie Donnelly

A proud woman on a hard road

ALTHOUGH she knew it would hasten her death if she stayed on the street, Maggie Donnelly, who has died aged 46, loved living on the noisy and unforgiving pavements around London's Charing Cross Embankment that she called her own.

She had been living rough for 20 years. Her bright blue eyes examined me keenly as I sat on the ground; she was concerned that I might get damp, and lent me a Sidney Sheldon thriller to sit on. She then gave me a thorough and sensible grilling about why I wanted to make this film.

When she was sober, she would wash each morning in the nearby ladies toilet. But her life was a pattern of extremes, and I learned to avoid seeing her on the danger days that coincided with her "giri" being paid out every two weeks. When the money and the drink suddenly ran out, the binge would pass. Then she was articulate, well-read and all too aware of what she was doing.



Maggie in Baglady... she showed spirited good humour and intelligence and painful honesty in the 1992 documentary

PHOTOGRAPH: ROD DELNOY

What, I wondered, was she trying to forget? Maggie grew up in a respectable home in Grimsby. Teachers at her secondary school remembered her as a perky if naughty pupil who was much liked by other children. At home, she suffered by comparison to her older brother, who was considered academically brilliant.

Her first painful disappointment came at the age of 16, when she discovered that her adored father was her adopted father. Feeling betrayed — and unloved by her adopted mother — she decided to leave home as soon as possible.

When she was younger, Maggie had enjoyed periods of stability. At one stage, she even had a promising career, working with children in homes. She caught the eye of Laurie Bisset, matron at a home, who was to become her most loyal friend. Laurie — tweedy, well-spoken and forthright — regularly took the train from Wiltshire to bring Maggie clothes and supplies.

When her health began to give way, Maggie was offered a flat by the Drink Crisis Centre, a care organisation for street alcoholics. The drinking didn't stop, but it declined. Away from the relentless noise of the street, Maggie started buying pictures for the walls of the flat. But after a bad fall, she spent most of

her time in a wheelchair. She knew her life would be short. But she felt a part of her had died when the little boy in her care had fallen in the bath. It struck me forcibly that Maggie's decline could so easily have happened to almost anyone. In the end, her liver just stopped functioning, as she must have known it would. The last time I saw her in her flat, I said it was great to see she was taking better care of herself. She raised a can of self.

David Pearson

Maggie Donnelly, bag lady, born November 26, 1949; died March 29, 1996.

Letters

KW Payne writes: Your obituary of Alan Illife (April 11), says that "He had joined the Army straight from school." In fact, Alan left Westcott High School in South London at the age of 15 to become a trainee actuary. This was to the surprise of all, and to the chagrin of the headmaster, who had anticipated a prestigious scholarship for his most brilliant pupil. I write as a contemporary schoolmate of Alan, albeit we lost touch later.

Roger Kojan writes: I last met Chris Seward (Obituary April 10) at a WOMAD festival about three years ago. I had not seen him for a long time but we had known each other for many years and it was typical of Chris that we immediately started talking and laughing. We talked with friends about music. Chris was very keen to hear some of the African musicians that were playing that weekend. The conversation moved on to the situation in Angola where Chris thought the easing of the Cold War would lead to a lessening of tension but he was aware it was still a dangerous place. It was typical of him to be open about his fears and still rise to the challenge. In many ways he embodied the spirit of the world and his untimely death leaves a great sadness.

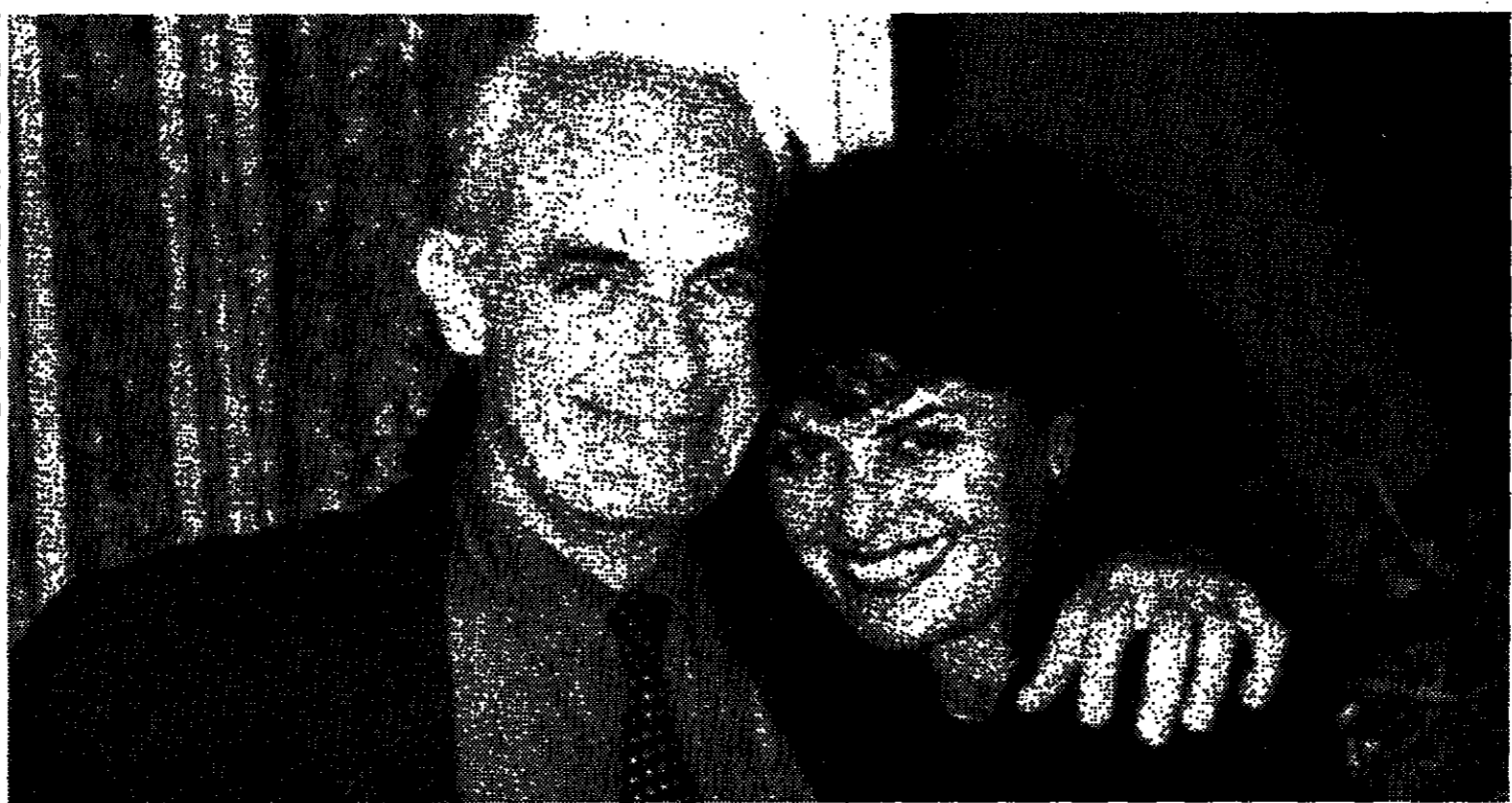
Tony Scott writes: I was privileged to campaign with John Powell (Obituary, April 4) in the Harrow Anti-Apartheid group from 1985-89. During those hectic years when both Nelson Mandela and South Africa were triumphantly freed, John was always a cheerful, kind and good-humoured comrade. Whether it was a march for Freedom in central London, a boycott protest or even a formal meeting, his enthusiasm and optimism never flagged. He was a sterling asset to the cause of racial justice and equality. I never forgot his tip for marchers and runners to pack their trainers with newspapers to protect their feet. His jocular reluctance to heed warnings to mind the traffic, was idiosyncratically what makes me remember with great fondness.

Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Changing reality in Cuba

WITH the death of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea at the age of 68, Latin American cinema has lost not only one of its most internationally admired directors but a great artist and intellectual who made an extraordinary impact on contemporary cinema.

Tito, as he was affectionately known by friends and colleagues, was born in Havana. He studied music, and graduated in law from Havana University in 1951. Bitten by the filmmaking bug (between 1947 and 1950 he had shot various shorts), he set off to study film direction at the Centre for Experimental Film School in Rome. There, he became friends with other students who were to become important figures in Latin American film: Fernando Birri and Julio Garcia Espinosa. Italy was home to the neo-realism movement which these young filmmakers passed on to Cuba. There, he became friends with other students who were to become important figures in Latin American film: Fernando Birri and Julio Garcia Espinosa.



Alea with his wife, Mira Ibarra... the director broke new ground in Cuba with topics like bourgeois alienation and gays

PHOTOGRAPH: SANDRA LEVINSON

ment) that he achieved international recognition. His study of bourgeois alienation in the midst of a socialist revolution generated a great deal of interest in the film-making movements of Latin America. Apart from awards at the Karlovy Vary festival, *Memories of Underdevelopment* made it to the New York Times list of that year's top 10 films.

Alea was one of the best intellectual critics of the revolutionary process in Cuba and he was never afraid of dealing with taboo subjects. In 1982, with *Fresa y Chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate), he broke ground again, generating a national debate in his story of a gay man and his parents, and puts them in order to achieve new meanings. This process can either distort reality or advance it to a more profound stage. The latter is, of course, what we all try to achieve. Each new film I start, unlike Bergman, does not seem my last but my first. It's as though I learn the

craft again. It's a disturbing feeling because I know I have too many projects and not enough time to do them. Cinema cannot be considered only as an instrument to change reality, there are left's face it, more efficient ones. If I make films it is also to satisfy a need to express and communicate, to establish contact with the world, to understand it and enjoy it better.

Anyone who knew Tito was touched by the gentle strength of his personality, by his determination to create a cinema of universal values that spoke about human concerns. I remember fondly his stay in London for a retrospective of his films and a Guardian interview in 1989 at the National Film Theatre. When he opened the booklet which accompanied his retrospective and saw all his films on paper, he was visibly moved. I saw in the face of this modest giant a glimpse of

satisfaction to have achieved such a body of work against all odds and to have put Cuba on the world cinema map. Even so, in recent years, the revolution began to collapse, and many intellectuals left the island. Alea continued to live in Cuba and make films — to improve the situation from the inside.

Rosa Bosch

Alex Anderson adds: I spent some time with Tito in the summer of 1993 while he was filming *Strawberry and Chocolate*. He was already suffering from the effects of lung cancer but he was determined not only to finish the film but to survive longer than anyone expected him to. He did. Despite such severe restrictions of budget and resources, I marvelled at his calmness. He told me that this was a recently acquired trait due mainly to a course of homeopathy, he said that

he had spent his life railing. This was hard to believe because on that makeshift film set in old Havana he had the respect and love of everyone in the crew. By then he had established an ensemble of technicians and actors who worked at a speed that would have pleased the most parsimonious producer.

Tito listening to his scriptwriter, the actors and his cameraman, Mayito, who all seemed to be speaking in shorthand. Finally, Tito would quietly give his directions, and the scene would be transformed from words on paper to cinematic storytelling. Fluid and dramatic.

In a country that demands political orthodoxy, Tito carved out his own critical space. Even when seriously ill, he made it look easy.

Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, filmmaker, born December 11, 1928; died April 16, 1996

Birthdays

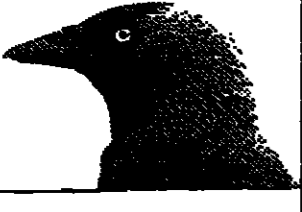
Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, prime minister of Sri Lanka, 90; Charles Barber, cricketer, 66; Joan Clague, former Davis Cup captain, 65; Joan Clague, former director of nursing services, Marie Curie Memorial Foundation, 65; Norman Cowans, cricketer, 85; Ruth Stoddell, former principal, St John's College, Durham, 85; Clare Francis, yachtswoman and novelist, 50; Bella Freud, fashion designer, 35; Anne Harris, former chairwoman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 71; Olivia Hussey, actress, 45; Yvonne Kapp, biographer of Eleanor Marx, 93; Henry Kelly, broadcaster, 50; James Last, bandleader, 67; Joyce Molyneux, chef, 65; Ricardo Patrese, grand prix driver, 42; Dora Saint (Miss Read), writer, 83; Ann Shirley, actress, 78; Sir John Vernon, chairman, RNLI, 70; The Rt Rev John Yates, head of the Archbishop of Canterbury's staff, 71.

Death Notices

BOCK, Florence Johanna Harriette, peacefully at home at April 14th 1996, aged 88 years. She was a devoted wife and mother, a loving family and many dear friends. Funeral at Putney Vale Crematorium on Friday April 19th at 10.30. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu to World's End Hospice, 100, Putney Lane, London SW15. Burial at Putney Vale Crematorium on Friday April 19th at 10.30. Friends of Putney Vale Crematorium.

IN MEMORIAM
GRIFFITHS, Heather, April 17th, 1996. "And death shall have no dominion". Jim and Denise.
To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4267. Fax 0171 713 4123.

Jackdaw



Jacket required

APPARENTLY, it's now fashionable to look like an author. Since records began, authors have been dressing like your ever-loving cousin from Soho in garments that looked as though they had been bought from Milletts by someone who was blindfolded and on Valium. Even if you are not personally acquainted with a novelist, this sartorial ineptitude is evident in almost any work of fiction. Only in novels will you find a character "looking chic and desirable in a flame kiltan" or a hero whose "beige slacks and sports jacket proclaimed him the

most stylish man in the room"

I used to work quite hard at being an exception to this... I used to think myself a swan among the geese that were my fellow scribblers. Then I started dating a stylist... I was encased in flat-front slacks and V-neck jerseys and nylon anoraks. I was worried that I looked like a nerd. "Don't worry about it, babe. Nerd is in. Just remember that you're wearing it ironically"...

Home help

BEWARE THE hidden dangers lurking in your home. Yes, you may think that the cruet set on top of the tablecloth looks harmless enough, but cruet sets sent 13 people to accident and emergency in

1994, and tablecloths a further eight... Five people had a run in with a sieve, 21 with clothes pegs, 31 with a sponge or loofah, 66 with buttons and 76 with a paper hankie...

Only 47 people were hurt by a firework, compared with 56 by a balloon. In medicine... eight had trouble with earpoppers, a further eight with nose/eye drops and 52 with vitamin pills or powders, while analgesics topped the league with 510 accidents. And three visited hospital as a consequence of thermometer use. So risk is the home with the potential for injury that even a mini version harbours risks — with 20 people suffering at the hands of a wendy when...

Chemist & Druggist reports on the Department of Trade and Industry's latest Home Accidents Surveillance System report. Thanks to Joseph Nicholas.

In the van

AS WE GET into our car and start to leave the compound, some heavily armed Khmer

Rouge soldiers charge in through the main gate. They wave us out of the car, put guns to our heads and stomachs and order us to put our hands over our heads. They take everything — our car, cameras, typewriters, radio, knapsacks — and push us into an armoured personnel carrier... We all get in — three journalists and our driver, Sarun — except for Fran. We hear him continuing his entreaties in Khmer outside... Finally he climbs in and the armoured car starts to rumble forward. After a few minutes of chilled silence, Sarun turns to me and... tells me that Fran, far from trying to get away, was doing the opposite — trying to talk his way into the armoured car. The Khmer driver had told him to leave, they didn't want him, only the Americans and "the big people". He knew we had no chance, so he argued not to be separated from us, offering, in effect, to forfeit his own life on the chance that he might save ours... Suddenly, after a 40-minute ride, the vehicle stops and the

rear door clangs open. We are ordered to get out. As we move, crouching through the door, we see two Khmer Rouge soldiers, their rifles on their hips pointing directly at us. Behind them is a sandy riverbank that slopes down to the Tonle Sap River. Rockoff and I exchange the briefest of fear-struck glances. We are thinking the same thing — they're going to do it here and roll us down the bank into the river.

But we climb out, like zombies. No shots are fired. Fran resumes his pleas, searching out a soldier who looks like an officer. For a solid hour he keeps appealing, cajoling, begging for our lives. The officer sends a courier on a motorbike to some headquarters in the centre of the city. We wait, still frozen but trying to hope, as Fran continues talking. Finally, the courier returns, more talk — and then, miraculously, the rifles are lowered. We are permitted to have a drink of water. I look at Fran and he allows himself a cautious smile. He's done it, I think, he's pulled it off.

Sydney Schanberg's report from Cambodia in January 1980, reprinted in the New York Times Magazine's bumper centenary issue.

Untimely

OUR REPORT on looting and violence in Sarajevo's suburbs was accompanied by a photograph showing two men carrying a television set from a building; its caption mistakenly



only described this as an act of looting. The picture, in fact, was of two journalists who were helping a family move its possessions out of a building that had been set on fire by a band of extremists. TIMES regrets the error.

Window closes

HE'D BEEN on The Team. The team for the Windows 95 launch. As a marketing guy, he'd helped spend the \$200 million Microsoft had devoted purely for advertising for the roll-out. Some of his ideas had actually sailed... Only a week before the launch date, Brad made the fatal slip of the tongue. Chalk it up to fatigue. Or his penchant for self-destruction... Over satay with two R & D guys in a cool new pen-Pacific place in a strip mall not far from Microsoft's Redmond campus, Brad had said simply, "Windows 95 equals Mac 96." That's all. The waiter took the check and Brad noticed that he took his sweet time returning. When

he did, the waiter wore a sheepish look. "Sorry, Mr Roth, your company credit card has been declined." Brad got a bad feeling.

Back in the marketing pod of the leafy, lawny Microsoft campus, he could tell the pink slip in his mail box was a different shade from the ones that showed up randomly and usually contained stock options. There was only a single e-mail: "You have not been selected to fill your current position. If you wish to talk further, I am always available through bill@Microsoft.com. Bill"

An instalment from Pat Dillon's roman a clef about life at Microsoft, serialised in the San Jose Mercury on-line edition (http://www.sjmercury.com/lasbest/1-1.htm).

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Dan Glaister

صحنه من الاجل

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Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian



Pedal power... Author Colin Dexter, with a student as his driver, was one of the first customers as the Oxford Rickshaw Company rolled yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENDEEN

Asda fights drug pricing

Euro-challenge to medicines cartel

Ian King

ASDA, the supermarket chain, is fighting to crush price controls on non-prescription medicines only months after leading the successful attack on the Net Book Agreement. Asda, served with a High Court injunction when it started discounting medicines last October, is taking the fight to the European Commission in an effort to force the drug companies and other high-street chemists to scrap the retail price maintenance on over-the-counter drugs.

The £3.2 billion supermarket group said yesterday that the system was "junk" which forced the public to pay over the odds for medicines and vitamins.

The pricing system is being investigated by the Office of Fair Trading, following Asda's first campaign last year, but which is not expected to announce its findings until the autumn.

Asda said the price controls infringe the Treaty of Rome, and that it was urging the commission to deal with the matter promptly.

The campaign is the latest populist move by Asda, which last year led a successful assault on the Net Book Agreement, a similar price-fixing agreement in the book industry.

Nick Cooper, Asda's corporate counsel, said retail price maintenance had originally been introduced in the public interest, but now allowed drug companies to fix prices higher than necessary.

Asda is expecting a tariff declaration over the next fortnight from Dutch customs and excise officials. They are expected to say that the price of bulk cod liver oil — which currently comes under the system — should not be fixed.

Mr Cooper added: "With that ruling in our hands, the public will be asking why they have to pay artificially high prices, just because multi-national drug companies put cod liver oil in a bottle with a dosage on the back."

However, the National Pharmaceutical Association, which represents more than 10,000 pharmacists across the country, immediately condemned Asda's action, claiming that it could put some chemists out of business.

Tim Astill, the association's director, warned that those chemists which survived would probably end up stocking a smaller range of medicines.

He added: "It seems Asda are quite keen on getting rid of retail price maintenance, and having been jumped on by the High Court, are pursuing other avenues."

A Boots spokesperson said: "We are fully supportive of retail price maintenance on non-prescriptive medicines, and do not believe there has been any significant change in the market since 1970, when this was last reviewed."

But Kingfisher, which owns Superdrug, said last night: "In principle, we are against retail price maintenance. We haven't seen details of this specific action, but we would welcome it."

There was no immediate response to Asda's latest initiative from SmithKline Beecham or Reckitt & Colman — two of the four companies behind last year's injunction — or from Hanson, owner of Seven Seas, one of the main brands which Asda started discounting last year.

Minister admits PFI merely way to save money

MPs sceptical as Jack promises more bangs for the buck, writes Larry Elliott

THE Government's much-vaulted Private Finance Initiative is now seen as a cost-saving measure rather than a source of extra infrastructure spending, the Treasury minister in charge of the scheme said last night.

Michael Jack, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, accepted a central thrust of a critical backbench report on the PFI when he admitted that the only additional money for public investment would come from better value for money.

Despite the scepticism expressed by the Conservative-dominated Treasury select committee, Mr Jack said the Government had already addressed some of the concerns of MPs and the private sector, insisting that PFI would deliver better services and "more bangs for the buck".

However, Labour seized on the findings, with Shadow chief secretary Andrew Smith saying the report was evidence of the Government's "misleading" of the PFI select committee report, while supporting the idea of the PFI in principle, expressed concern about the planning of investment, the possible cost to the public purse, the reluctance of the private sector to become involved and the slow progress in getting projects off the ground.

Bid gossip and spending news push share prices to new highs

Paul Murphy

FRESH flurry of bid speculation, coming on top of this week's news of an apparent recovery in consumer spending, sent share prices racing to record levels again yesterday.

With dealers reporting brisk business across nearly all stock market sectors, the FTSE 100 index of leading companies jumped 34.8 points to a new peak of 3825.5.

This display of confidence in the Square Mile has caught many equity strategists off guard, with institutional fund managers and private investors alike rushing to buy stock despite last week's byelection, which reduced the Government's majority to one.

City analysts had expected the byelection to herald an extended period of "pre-election fitters".

Instead, dealers are now betting that the boom in corporate mergers and takeovers will continue.

Conscious that a Labour government is likely to tighten controls over takeovers, companies are trying to agree deals in advance of the General Election.

Share prices have also been boosted by the fashion for share buy-backs and special dividends, with companies returning spare cash to shareholders ahead of any moves by a Labour government to restrict dividend payments in favour of reinvestment.

"Cash is flooding into the market," noted Mark Tinker, equity strategist at stockbroker James Capel, "out of maturing Tessa accounts and out of corporate balance sheets."

"With interest rates low and looking to stay low for some time, people are simply looking for somewhere to put their money."

"Everyone has been surprised with how smoothly the market has dealt with the political uncertainty," said Nick Knight, head of a hot strategy at Japanese broker Nomura. "The City might well be getting it wrong. Traditionally, for the markets Labour spells red under the bed. It's looked under the bed and can't find any, and so everything is perceived to be OK."

Yet the potential problem is that New Labour is too much like Old Tory — and the new Government will be tempted to copy the old Tory trick of having a recession early in the parliamentary term so things can be made to look rosy in time for the next election. The real threat is that, whoever wins the next election, interest rates will go up fast.

Share prices were also helped yesterday by Monday's news that, according to the British Retail Consortium, retail sales last month jumped 7.5 per cent — the biggest rise for more than two years — fuelling hopes that confidence is finally returning to the High Street.

Yesterday's surge in prices in London was mirrored in New York, where forecasts of more big takeover bids propelled shares to record levels.

In Frankfurt, the IBIS DAX index rose to an all-time high despite government recognition that growth this year would fail to meet its 1.5 per cent target.

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Chileans issue bribery writ against City copper dealer

Owen Bowcott and Paul Murphy

CHILE'S state-owned metal producer, Codelco yesterday issued a writ alleging bribery against a second London-based commodity trading company as the investigation into the City's lucrative copper market intensified.

The action, disclosed at a press conference in Santiago by Luis Bates, president of Chile's State Defence Council, and posted at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, claims that a \$1.5 million (£1 million) payment was made to a Codelco employee.

The cash sent by Metallgesellschaft, which trades on the London Metal Exchange, was allegedly paid into an account opened in the Cayman Islands by a former Codelco futures operator, Juan Pablo Devila, Mr Bates claimed.

Earlier this year, City lawyers acting for Codelco issued a writ against another London-based firm, Sogemin. The latest move by a producer nation against the City's copper market follows news that the Securities and Futures Authority is investigating another British company which profited from specialising in copper, Winchester Commodities.

Earlier this week it was disclosed that the founder of Winchester, millionaire dealer Charles Vincent, who earned the nickname Copper-fingers, had unexpectedly resigned from his place on the board. Yesterday, the SFA stated that, contrary to earlier reports, it had been informed of Mr Vincent's resignation.

The SFA has also been talking to Winchester about a small number of deals conducted with Codelco.

Telecom talks change pitch as top executives play C&W

Merger 1

Nicholas Barnister

MERGER talks between British Telecom and Cable & Wireless moved into top gear yesterday when their chairman and chief executives met for the first time to consider recommendations from their financial advisers.

Sources close to the talks said Sir John Vellence and Sir Peter Bonfield of BT and Dr Brian Smith and Rod Olsen of C&W had their first substantive meeting since earlier attempts to hammer out a deal collapsed at the beginning of March.

Merger 2

John Glover in Zurich

SIX thousand shareholders of Union Bank of Switzerland in Zurich's Hallen Stadium yesterday delivered a vote of confidence in the board of the bank, electing the outgoing chief executive Robert Studer and three other candidates to the board by a margin of almost 63 per cent.

Mr Studer will now become chairman of the board, replacing Nikolaus Senn, who becomes honorary chairman. The result was "according to expectations," said Mr Senn.

Notebook

Feelgood factor banishes nerves



Edited by Patrick Donovan

THE City may be in the process of overcoming its hang-up about the very real possibility of a Labour government. For weeks, highly paid strategists have put the Footsie's listless performance down to market fears about the political uncertainty.

And yet within days of the Tories latest by-election humiliation, the markets are flizzing. Storming away for the second day running, the index soared past the 3800 barrier to close 40 points higher.

The explanation seems to be that the spate of "feelgood statistics" seems to have overcome the City's political nervousness. With such compelling evidence that the retail sector is back on the growth track, traders seem to have thrown caution to the winds and embarked on one of their biggest buying sprees since the beginning of the year. Yesterday's bumper profits from Tesco were just another sign shoppers are coming back to the market.

This change in sentiment is having such an effect on the market because it coincides with three other factors. First, the market was due for something of a bounceback because London shares have been artificially held back by political uncertainty.

Second, the upward correction has been given added momentum by the surge in Wall Street over the last few days. For all the talk of the "decoupling" of international markets, London shares march to the tune of their transatlantic counterparts.

And third, the scene has been further set for a share bonanza because of the sheer volume of cash which has been pouring into institutional coffers. Cash flow is standing at a record £80 million, largely because of the spate of mega share buybacks and cash takeover bids.

The markets may not be endorsing Labour. It's just that the much-hyped "political factor" becomes irrelevant when the City is on a roll.

These are all perfectly valid points, made even more telling by the lukewarm response of the supposedly go-getting private sector, which liked the certainty of the old system and is reluctant to take on oodles of extra risk.

PFI substitute

THOSE who have watched the Private Finance Initiative unfold over the past four years have known for some time that it's a disaster waiting to happen.

The idea was simple. With governments everywhere strapped for cash, the private sector would be invited to build new infrastructure projects that would supplement investment carried out by the Government.

But as with most fiendishly simple ideas, the reality has been a bit different. Despite a list as long as your arm of projects "in the pipeline", few have actually been built. The biggest, juiciest PFI deal of all — the Channel Tunnel Rail Link — is still going ahead with a massive public hand-out.

All this and more is detailed in the report yesterday by the Conservative-dominated Treasury select committee which makes some telling criticisms. It rightly concludes that the PFI has become a substitute for public investment rather than a source of additional funding; it says the scheme makes long-term planning more difficult; and it is worried that projects will be determined by profit rather than need.

These are all perfectly valid points, made even more telling by the lukewarm response of the supposedly go-getting private sector, which liked the certainty of the old system and is reluctant to take on oodles of extra risk.

None of this, of course, cuts any ice with the Government, which has developed a messianic belief that the private sector will provide better value for money and "more bangs for the buck". Indeed, ministers rather resemble Napoleon and his chums in Animal Farm, forever chanting "private sector good, public sector bad" when the real reason for their inaction is that if the Government wants Britain to have a decent, modern infrastructure there is no substitute for putting up the money itself.

Maverick unable to turn UBS shareholders against board

Merger 2

John Glover in Zurich

SIX thousand shareholders of Union Bank of Switzerland in Zurich's Hallen Stadium yesterday delivered a vote of confidence in the board of the bank, electing the outgoing chief executive Robert Studer and three other candidates to the board by a margin of almost 63 per cent.

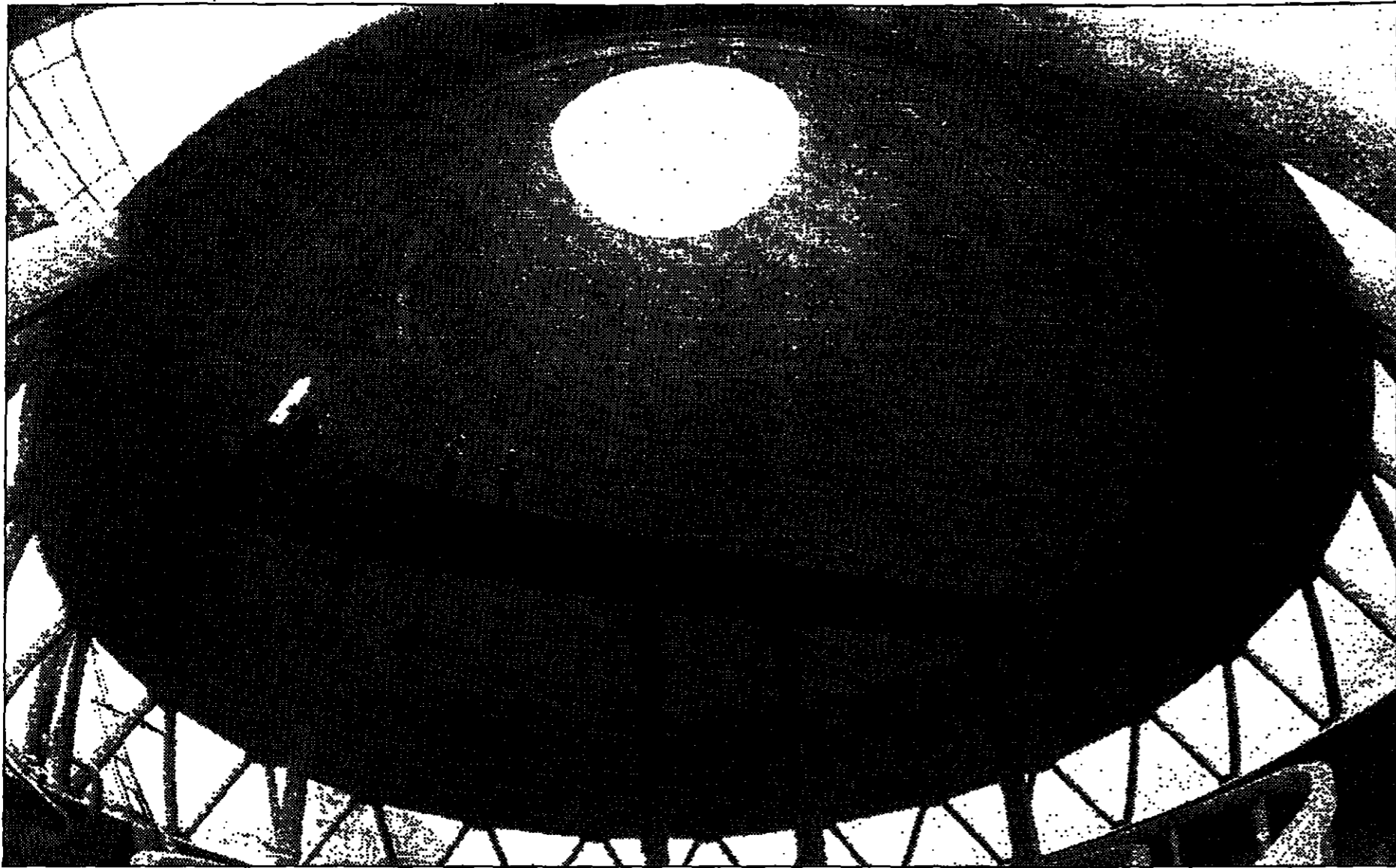
Mr Studer will now become chairman of the board, replacing Nikolaus Senn, who becomes honorary chairman. The result was "according to expectations," said Mr Senn.

At the meeting Mr Ebner called for "a board and a management which has the capacity to implement a clearly defined strategy geared to optimising returns". This is code for an aggressive restructuring of the Swiss branch network and for the bank's withdrawal from low-margin businesses such as lending to multinational corporations.

A similar result might also be achieved by merging two of Switzerland's three big banks. Last week UBS rejected a proposal from Credit Suisse that the rival institutions begin merger talks. "This is not the right moment for merger of two of the big three banks," Mr Senn said. But he predicted restructuring in the Swiss banking industry would continue.

TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS			
Australia 1.96	France 7.47	Italy 2.330	Singapore 2.08
Austria 15.40	Germany 2.2050	Malta 0.3950	South Africa 6.76
Belgium 45.25	Greece 358.00	Netherlands 2.4675	Spain 184.00
Canada 1.8875	Hong Kong 11.48	New Zealand 2.15	Sweden 10.58
Cyprus 0.7020	India 51.51	Norway 9.58	Switzerland 1.78
Denmark 8.55	Ireland 0.84	Portugal 227.00	Turkey 106.13
Finland 7.08	Israel 4.77	Saudi Arabia 5.63	USA 1.4750

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding India, Nepal and South Africa)



Old tech... The British Steel cooling tower at Felindre, near Swansea, is to be demolished in the hope of attracting investment to the former tinsplate works. PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY MORGAN

Valley of the info technocrats

WORKFACE/ Geoffrey Gibbs examines a plan aimed at reviving the decaying former Welsh mining communities

INNOVATIVE proposals for the creation of a technology-based "industrial village" are being put before government as the means of rescuing a once-thriving South Wales valley from the cycle of decline and deprivation that has followed the collapse of the coal mining industry.

The proposals, drawn up by Peter Hain, Labour MP for Neath, and officers from the Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council, are aimed at bringing some 900 jobs to the Dulais Valley where Blaenau, the valley's last deep mine, closed in 1990.

Mr Hain, who outlined the plans at a meeting at the Welsh Office yesterday, believes the concept could be applied to other declining communities and is seeking priority funding support for the pilot project.

In an impassioned plea to Welsh Secretary William Hague ahead of yesterday's meeting, Mr Hain warned: "The Valleys are dying." Long-term unemployment was desperately high and new jobs were often part-time and always low-paid, he said.

"Where the old stereotype was of a miner on a decent industrial wage with a wife at home, now it is his wife who is working, on a third or, at best, half his earnings, with the husband kicking his heels at home. This is a recipe for despair and social disintegration."

Mutual help and support — the pride of Valley people — were being destroyed. Crime

had soared, drugs were rampant and young people had no future. "We cannot let those once vibrant, enterprising communities die. It is no good pretending the Valleys can become mere commuter belts for the M4 corridor. Transport is poor. People are used to working near their homes. We need a new economic agenda for the Valleys based on partnership between government and private enterprise."

For Dulais, the process of decline that set in with the closure of Blaenau has struck deep into the village communities of Ollwyn, Seven Sisters and Crynant.

Around 13 per cent of the adult workforce is registered as unemployed (compared with 8.2 per cent for Wales as

a whole) and the communities have suffered the loss of shops, garages and the bank, with the result that villagers must travel out of the valley for all but everyday needs.

Although vacant business units and development land are readily available, intensive marketing has so far failed to attract inward investment. As the authors of the Dulais Valley strategy acknowledge, the valley suffers from an image of being remote, isolated from the main highway network and with a small consumer base. Adding insult to injury, the site of the former colliery presents "a gloomy and unfortunate gateway to the valley".

Against this grim backdrop, the Dulais Valley Partnership — a grouping of the

village communities, local authorities and private industry — has been established with the determined aim of turning the tide of decline by bringing the "industrial village" concept to life.

New jobs would be created through the creation of local indigenous business enterprise and through attracting inward investment — a process that is expected to become easier following completion of the A465 dual carriageway through the Vale of Neath.

In addition to the economic initiatives, the proposal — which requires anticipated funding of £19.75 million — embraces a cocktail of measures including education and training, community development initiatives, and

environmental improvements designed to recreate the natural woodlands destroyed by the industrial revolution.

"New technology and expertise will be a central feature in the 'industrial village' concept," say the authors of the report. "It will provide an important resource, and focus on industries and services for which geographical location is not a primary consideration."

"In terms of dispersed, small communities, telecommunications [long-distance transmission of computerised information] provide the means to reduce distance and remoteness. This would involve information technology being an everyday feature of the school, library/resource centre, workplace and home."

contributions so low is tantamount to taxpayer subsidy of privatisation. As such the decision could be in breach of European rules on state aid.

He also points out that other electricity generators would have legitimate grounds for complaint since nuclear stations would ensure clearly not be bearing their full generation costs.

Mr Sadiński says that allowing British Energy to pay less than £127 million from privatisation would be "diverting cash away from future liabilities towards current profits and dividends".

Forcing British Energy to make higher contributions to the fund would clamp its profitability and worry potential investors.

The Government agreed to a segregated fund to reassure the public that there would be money ring-fenced to pay for clean-up operations at nuclear stations long after they have ceased operating. Ministers said the move would ensure that liabilities did not fall to taxpayers by default.

Commissioned by Friends of the Earth and the Consortium of Opposing Local Authorities, Mr Sadiński's report suggests the ministerial pledges were "hollow promises" and that the Government and British Energy have revised the original underlying assumptions behind the fund in seven ways.

The scope of the fund will exclude crucial liabilities, such as the management and disposal of intermediate and high-level waste, the reprocessing of the final core after the seven advanced gas-cooled reactors (AGRs) have closed and the defuelling of an AGR station immediately after shut-down.

Ministers have also assumed healthy investment rates for the fund, even though the period in question — 130 years — is too long for confident prediction.

Bad times still good at Tesco

Outlook

Pauline Springett

THE loyalty card is a success. The petrol price war could knock £30 million off this year's profits (but is not a disaster), the BSE scare has halved beef sales (but they are recovering), and a clutch of supermarkets are under construction. Oh yes, and Tesco's figures were quite good as well.

Steadily, the stock market did not share Tesco's own enthusiasm for its results yesterday. This was partly triggered by the announcement by chairman Sir Ian MacLaurin that dividend growth would be lower than before.

Sir Ian made reassuring noises by saying that dividends would still be increased. He explained that the company simply wanted to spend more on UK stores and European acquisitions.

Of more serious concern to the market was the revelation

that Tesco's operating margin in the UK was unchanged from the previous year at 6.2 per cent. Worse, the UK gross margin was down 0.2 per cent, equivalent to £30 million. Terry Leahy, deputy managing director, said food retailing was highly competitive. "We don't expect it to get immediately worse, and we don't expect it to get much better."

Despite its apparently rosy trading position and given the competitive environment and the apparent rise of the cheaper discount food retailers, Tesco appears to face a long-term growth problem. However, it has several plans of attack. It is committed to greater efficiency and productivity, but insists this is not short-handed for job losses. It added 2,500 jobs last year and expects to add a similar number this year.

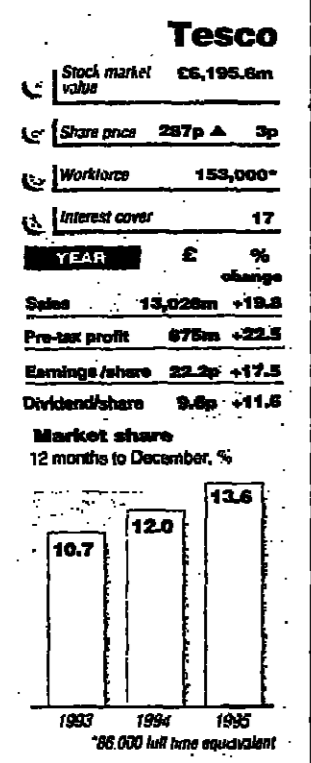
Instead, it is planning greater streamlining of computer systems plus cost-cutting in the supply chain. It is, for example, abandoning cardboard containers and replacing them with re-usable plastic crates. Tesco is hoping that such measures will save £100 million.

But this is not the stuff of mega profit growth. To this end Tesco has to wage war on two battle fronts.

The familiar war zone is the UK. Here, Tesco is trying to win more business and to persuade current customers to spend more. As part of the onslaught it is building more stores despite the Government's efforts to clamp down on out-of-town developments. It now has 545 stores in the UK and plans to open 24 shops this year.

The company is also extending its Clubcard loyalty scheme, which has now been operating for more than a year with 8 million members. It is being used to monitor their spending habits and has already sharpened up Tesco's promotions policy.

Finally, there is Europe. The group has invested £100 million, is encouraged by the results and plans to increase its activity if all goes well. David Malpas, managing director, said the area was high risk and that the strategy would take a while to produce returns. Tesco will hope it does not take too long.



News in brief

Societies up stakes in takeover game

BUILDING societies around the country yesterday boosted their minimum opening balances in response to an epidemic of speculative investment since the takeover of Bristol & West by Bank of Ireland on Monday.

Birmingham Midshires increased its opening level from £100 to £1,500 at 17 of its branches. The level at the rest of its network was set at £500. This follows a surge of new account openings on speculation that the society may be taken over by the Woolwich, Leeds & Holbeck, another society tipped for a takeover, raised its minimum opening balance yesterday to £1,000 while the Chelsea raised its to £2,500. — *Cliff Jones*

Insurer's profits dampener

COMMERCIAL Union, the UK's largest composite insurer, said yesterday that bad weather in the UK and the US at the beginning of the year would make first-quarter profits "soggy". Poor weather in the US cost the company £12 million in January, said chief executive John Carter. He added that the first quarter figures would nevertheless show a rise in profits because of the impact of investment returns. — *Pauline Springett*

Keeping up with Jones

SHAREHOLDERS of BICC, the cables and construction group, voted through proposals which will give new chief executive Alan Jones a cash and shares bonus worth up to 75 per cent of his basic average salary over a three-year period. Mr Jones, who joined BICC in April last year, was paid a basic salary of £266,850 for the eight months to the year's end — equivalent to an annual £400,275. The award will be paid half in cash and half in shares. Other executive directors and senior managers will also be eligible for bonus awards up to a maximum of half their average basic pay based on the last 24 months of the three-year period. — *Tony May*

Redland raises the roof

THE Redland building materials group is to become the largest European supplier of roofing products and services, with pre-forma sales of £1.2 billion in 1995, after a restructuring of its roofing businesses announced yesterday. The group is merging with Braas & Co, a German roof tiling company in which it already has a 50.76 per cent stake. Redland said that as part of the deal it would receive £220 million in cash for contributing its directly owned roofing business, and would increase its stake to 56.5 per cent of the new Redland-Braas Building Group. The remaining 43.5 per cent will be owned by the existing minority shareholders of Braas. — *Tony May*

Money back guarantee

REUTERS, the international news and information group, hopes to resolve the question of how to return surplus cash to shareholders by the end of the year. The company's cash pile grew to £250 million in 1995 but chief executive Peter Job has not put a figure on how much it plans to return to shareholders. The company carried out a 350 million share buy-back in 1993. Revenue in the first quarter of 1996 rose by 14 per cent over the same quarter of 1995 to £713 million, but the group warned that revenue growth from information products was slowing. — *Tony May*

Hanson power play

HANSON has raised £84 million from the sale of its Eversedy South Africa subsidiary to the US corporation DuPont Inc. The Anglo-American conglomerate said the deal was a further step in its demerger programme. Derek Bonham, Hanson's chief executive, said Eversedy South Africa had sales of £84 million in the year to September 30, 1995. — *Reuter*

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£112.79	£4,133.92	16.9%
£116.33	£5,068.80	19.9%
£116.00	£5,583.84	18.9%
£116.00	£5,568.00	18.7%

48 monthly repayments	Total amount payable	APR
£188.07	£9,027.36	13.8%
£206.68	£9,920.64	19.9%
£194.31	£9,326.88	15.9%
£199.32	£9,567.36	17.5%

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Racing Salasabil backed for another day

Nell Gwyn upset sees runner-up cut for fillies' classics. Chris Hawkins reports

THIRLLING DAY, who is not entered for the 1,000 Guineas, sprung a 20-1 surprise when beating Bint Salsabil in a short-head in the Newmarket Stakes at Newmarket yesterday.

Classic trials are notoriously tricky and on the face of it the result merely strengthens the claims of Boera Sham, who was cut to 11-10 favourite for the 1,000 by Coral's.

But Bint Salsabil, who tried to make all the running and fought back when headed, will undoubtedly be suited by another furlong and cannot be discounted.

Ladbrokes slashed her from 25-1 to 10's for the Guineas and made her 5-1 favourite for the Oaks.

As she is by the Derby winner Salasabil, she should certainly be suited by a mile and a half but one could argue that as both her sire and dam also won the Guineas she will have enough speed for a mile.

Henry Cecil has his string

in forward condition and landed a double with Sharpes and Dovaj, the latter flooring the well-touted Sacho who is determined to run in the Museum Maiden Stakes.

Sacho, trained by John Gosden, had been prominently quoted for the Derby, but he is not over-enthusiastic physically and Gosden looks for a longer hope on this form.

Pat Eddery had a great afternoon. He partnered the two Cecil winners and supplemented them with Passion For Life in the same league as Lake Corlinton, who was seen to win the Abernant Stakes and Samzo in the Swaffham Handicap to make it a 246-1 four-timer.

Geoff Lewis does not rate Passion For Life in the same league as Lake Corlinton, who was seen to win the Abernant Stakes and Samzo in the Swaffham Handicap to make it a 246-1 four-timer.

David Loder received little encouragement for Blue Duster, 7-2 second favourite for the 1,000, from the running of her stable-companion Maid For The Hills, who finished fifth after showing speed for five furlongs. She looked very fit and this is probably as good as she is.

Henry Cecil has his string

Cayman Kai can keep up the Hannon run

CAYMAN KAI looks the pick of a disappointing field of six for today's European Free Handicap at Newmarket. Richard Hannon has hit the Royal Mile yesterday for an hour last night.

Chris Hawkins

Desert Boy won the Convivial Stakes at York on firm ground when holding on by a short-head from subsequent winner Leonzio.

On the strength of that he was made favourite for the Hill Reef Stakes at Newbury, but on a softish surface he finished tailed off behind Kahr Almaydan.

That was too bad to be true and as the stable slogger makes a mistake in assessing an animal he will surely win a decent race or two this season.

Tumbledweed Ridge could probably be construed as the form horse on his head face he finished tailed off

in the Gimcrack Stakes, but any choice is Cayman Kai (3-40), who showed a lot of speed to win the Flying Childers Stakes at Doncaster and was then a highly respectable runner-up to Blue Iris in the Redcar Two-Year-Old Trophy.

At Pontefract, Sondas (3-20) is an interesting runner in the Racing Channel fillies Handicap. She bolted in by seven lengths in a fast time on her reappearance, but that was on the all-weather track at Wolverhampton.

If she has genuinely improved she must take all the beating of a reasonable mark here.



Tipped... Thrilling Day (left) gets a short-head verdict over Bint Salsabil in yesterday's Nell Gwyn Stakes. PHOTOGRAPH FRANK BARN

Swinburn out of 2,000 Guineas

WALTER SWINBURN has lost the battle to be fit to partner Royal Applause in the 2,000 Guineas following his life-threatening illness in Hong Kong two months ago, writes Chris Hawkins.

"I'm seeing the doctor again on Friday, but the shoulder blade is still causing me problems and to be fair to Barry Hills I've told him I won't be fit to ride," said Swinburn at Newmarket races yesterday.

Newmarket with form for the televised events

2.00 Kerry King	2.40 Cayman Kai
2.25 Revolving Wheel (nh)	4.18 At Liberty
3.05 Desert Star	4.48 Woodcase
	8.20 Hunter Hoops

Down to scratch: 4. Descent, 4.48. Ongoing: 2.00, 2.25, 3.05, 4.18, 4.48, 8.20.

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Results

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NEWCASTLE	103	203
NEWCASTLE	120	220

0930 168+

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CRICKET: THE COUNTIES CAST THEIR VOTES FOR TWO ENGLAND SELECTORS

Gooch stock rises as Lord's sweats on Beefy

Paul Weaver finds growing support for a former Test captain and an England legend

THE announcement will not be made until tomorrow, and the counties have until midnight tonight to make up their minds...

executive Alan Smith. 'I'm perfectly happy with all of them. All eight are very good people and I don't find it unhealthy to have that many candidates...

Both Gooch and Barnett have the advantage of being current players, with Gooch's greater experience likely to see him do well in his case...



Kim Barnett Age 35. Tests 4 (1988-89) HIGHEST score of 80, against Australia in 1989. Nominated for England selector by Derbyshire...



Brian Bolus Age 62. Tests 7 (1963-64) PRIVILEGED, along with Edrich, Illingworth's personal choice again - though that recommendation did not stop him losing his job to David Graveney in last year's ballot...



Ian Botham Age 40. Tests 102 (1977-92) ENGLAND'S leading bowler (383 wickets) and one of the best all-rounders ever (more than 5,000 Test runs)...



Chris Cowdrey Age 38. Tests 6 (1984-88) HAS been in marketing and consultancy work since his retirement after career with Kent...



John Edrich Age 58. Tests 77 (1963-75) AN Illingworth preference, the gritty former Surrey left-handed opener scored more than 5,000 Test runs...



Graham Gooch Age 42. Tests 113 (1975-85) NOMINATED by Essex and has backed Botham's candidature; both are respected by current professionals...



David Graveney Age 43. No Tests SECRETARY of the Cricketers' Association, the players' union which vetoed his attempt to replace Illingworth as manager...



Geoff Miller Age 43. Tests 34 (1976-84) HAS made a career of after-dinner speaking since retiring as an all-rounder for England, Essex and Derbyshire...

Another injury for Johnson

RICHARD JOHNSON, the 21-year-old Middlesex fast bowler who missed England's tour of South Africa with a stress fracture to the back, has been forced out of the season's first serious fixture with a shoulder strain...



Unionising league... Scott Quinnell recalls his days as a Lanelli and Wales forward as he jumps at the chance of line-out practice with Wigan, preparing at their unpretentious training ground behind Central Park for a May 11 debut in the Middlesex Sevens and a 15-a-side date with Bath under union rules at Twickenham on May 25th. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Rugby League Nickle clear as Matautia waits

SONNY NICKLE, Bradford Bulls' second-row forward, was yesterday cleared of injury after being placed on report during Sunday's Super League match against his former club St Helens at Knowsley Road...

Great Britain captain, has joined St Helens as assistant to the head coach Shaun McRae after finally being granted an early release by Salford...

Hockey Britain beef it up for second win

THE Great Britain men's team defeated Argentina, the Pan American champions, for the fifth time in six matches but this 2-0 win in the pre-Olympic event here said more about their opponents' missed chances...

London Marathon Costly challenge to Ceron hat-trick

DIONICIO CERON is taking nothing for granted as he aims to extend his supremacy in Sunday's London Marathon. The Mexican, winner for the past two years, starts favourites for an unprecedented hat-trick...

'But at the same time we are all human. Everyone has their problems. I didn't feel good in the world championships last year, so in a marathon you can never predict the outcome.'

After the Boston Marathon on Monday, which Kenya used as its Olympic trial, Kenyan officials said the men's winner Moses Tanui and their first woman Tiaia Lorupe, who finished second to the German Uta Pippig...

Runners have long wait as Boston chips go down QUESTIONS were being asked last night about new technology due to be used in the Flora London Marathon on Sunday and this summer's Olympic Games...

Tennis Muster tries Queen's gambit

THOMAS MUSTER, who lost his world No. 1 ranking to Pete Sampras last Sunday, is to make his debut at the Stella Artois Championships in the grand slam of Queen's Club from June 10 to 18...

Badminton Penalty lifts harassed Hall

DARREN HALL had to overcome illness, a dispute with the umpire, and the most dangerous first-round opponent in the draw at the European Championships here in Denmark yesterday...

land brink

it double

the move again

SportsGuardian

As the Five Nations Committee issued an ultimatum to toe the line or face expulsion the RFU remained set on its own TV deal

England given 10-day deadline

Robert Armstrong

ENGLAND have 10 days to decide whether to toe the line of their partners in the Five Nations Championship or condemn themselves to isolation. As the Rugby Football Union refused to budge in its determination to strike its own television deals, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and France yesterday issued a thinly veiled threat of expulsion from the championship.

They said they intend to "consider the future format" of the competition, and suggested that the inclusion of England players in next year's Lions tour of South Africa might also be at risk.

The Five Nations Committee dismissed England's plans as "wholly unacceptable" and, in effect, issued an ultimatum: the RFU must either abandon its aim of going it alone by Saturday week, the

date of the next Five Nations meeting in Dublin, or drop out of the championship from 1998 onwards. Italy could be invited to take England's place. Since the start of the Five Nations Championship in 1910 no member has been expelled except France, from 1931 to 1947 over professionalism. Fred McLeod, who represents Scotland, made it clear that the principle of partnership — not just a wrangle over money — would be at stake when the current £27 million three-year deal with the BBC expired in a year's time. "The unilateral decision by the RFU to negotiate its own broadcasting rights [is] a point of principle that would undermine the whole structure of the championship," he said.

England hit back sharply last night. John Jevons-Fellows, one of their FNC negotiators, said: "I cannot contemplate any circumstances in which England will not participate in the Five Nations Championship. France have been doing their own TV thing for years. Are they in the Five Nations or not?" "We have been able to negotiate our own overseas rights for six years. Why not at home? We are not prepared to take a 25 per cent across the board and we are going ahead with our plan, which was approved by the Rugby Union's full committee."

Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, insisted his union's independent stance would not harm the championship. "We believe all unions will be able to benefit from our decision and the Five Nations will remain inviolate. We want a larger share of the cake because we have more mouths to feed in terms of clubs, schools and players." England have roughly twice as many players as Wales, Scotland and Ireland together.

It is understood that the overall value of a new five-year TV contract with the Five Nations would be around £150 million. England will lay claim to £75 million, leaving the other three home unions to settle for £25 million each. France already negotiates its own TV agreement with Antenne 2, setting a precedent that has encouraged England to push for a contract covering all internationals staged at Twickenham.

The current share-out of BBC money gives England £9 million over three years with the other home unions getting £5 million each. France, traditionally secretive about TV and sponsorship income, is thought to receive around £10 million a season from all sources.

The RFU, which has the most costly and extensive development programme in the world, claims it needs more money to implement a professional game than the other unions, many of whose players in any case are now transferring to English clubs.

Not surprisingly, England plan to negotiate with a range of companies including the BBC, ITV, BSkyB and cable television, to put together a package that includes terrestrial and satellite transmission. Next season will almost certainly be the last in which two Five Nations matches are played at the same time, an arrangement that has prevented England from negotiating the true commercial value of their home matches.

Even so, it will take months of hard bargaining to break down the angry objections of the other unions and achieve a working compromise. Yesterday's FNC statement warned that relationships at all international representative levels would have to be considered. "This breakdown by England from the existing arrangements could have implications for British Lions tours," it said. "The other unions of the FNC will now be obliged to reappraise their positions generally."

What's all the fuss about?

Step by step guide to a rebellion

John Duncan

So what is all this about England being kicked out of the Five Nations? Put simply, the BBC's television deal comes up for renewal next year and England want a bigger slice of whatever the new cake is. At the moment the four home nations — France negotiates TV separately — receive an equal split from the three-year £27 million deal.

What has sparked the argument? England have started talking to television companies on their own. The other nations smell a rat and are telling the RFU that if it doesn't agree to do any deals through the normal collective channels, with the money split pretty much as before, England will be kicked out and replaced with Italy.

So this is what they mean by professionalism? Basically this is about brink-

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS STILL HOPEFUL IN ATHENS



Jump to it... Ajax's Jari Litmanen prepares for tonight's European Cup semi-final second leg. PHOTOGRAPH: JERRY LAMPINEN

Ajax hope home nerves will fray

AJAX's coach Louis van Gaal believes the high expectations of the Panathinaikos supporters may unsettle the Greek club and help his defending champions overcome their one-goal deficit in tonight's European Cup semi-final second leg in Athens.

"Greek fans consider Panathinaikos players as heroes after their win in Amsterdam," he said. "They want them to reach the final at any cost, and that will make them nervous." Some 80,000 supporters are expected to pack the Olympic Stadium as Pan-

athinaikos attempt to reach the European Cup final for the first time since 1971 — when they were defeated 2-0 by Ajax. Panathinaikos, who returned to the top of the Greek league after their 1-0 victory over A.E.K. field their Polish international

striker Krzysztof Warzycha, who scored his sixth goal of the tournament — "the most important of my career" — in Amsterdam. The Dutch champions will be without their striker Patrick Kluijvert, who injured a knee in a league match last weekend.

New light on shirt-swapping and adultery



Vincent Hanna

THIS has not been an easy time for me. Honestly, the trouble that simple things like adultery and changing your shirt in public can get you into. I don't want to talk about it. All right, you twisted my arm. Rachel the therapist burst into the shed yesterday. She was beside herself — her favourite position. "This is a crisis," she snapped. "Your daughter is under her bed sobbing about her new outfit, and your wife says she cannot forgive your 21-year-old bimbo. All you can think about is sport."

I tried to reason with her. "Look, Nick's sex life has nothing to do with beating Greg. And there'll be a new white outfit next season." This made her worse. She threw the fax machine at me and stormed out babbling about my gay lover who is into S & M. She should see a therapist.

All the same, I cannot shift my wife off the "main point of the Masters". All her friends agree with her, she says. Nick Faldo's sixth major counts for nothing because "he ran off with that floosee from Arizona."

At nine o'clock on Sunday I was hunted out to the shed and the golf turned off. By 10.30 my family, and half the country, were glued to the sight of Greg Norman celebrating the anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic by running into an iceberg named Faldo. Thus sunk, Norman must have felt, as John Keats once did, *Were I under water I would scarcely kick to come to the top*.

But the tut-tuts at breakfast were of wives scorned and bimbos honoured, and when I talked of Nick's focused play they hissed "adultery" from behind the toast-rack. No wonder Rachel was confused. I changed the subject. "Look at that nonsense with Man United's grey strip; the team is over-reacting."

"What do you mean?" snapped Sinead. "How can you score when you look like pastel wimps, like colour-blind pygmies?" I pointed out that she had purchased the said grey outfit from the United Superstore. Yes, she admitted, as she had

the red, green-and-yellow, blue-and-white and the black ones, each stencilled with the name Cantona at 75p per letter, a total investment of £157.21. "I know my duty to the team," she added, "but I hate the strip."

Anyway, Umbro paraded in Manchester on Monday and explained that the grey outfit would be dropped and yet another one (all white) would replace it next season. Umbro is forking out £80 million over six years to put the shirts on Eric's back. But the company gets most of it back from the pocket-money of children, and thousands must feel ripped off.

The decision to dump grey was taken because, as Alex Ferguson explained, "the players couldn't pick each other out against the background of the crowd".

I sought the advice of Barney Tremblay, who specialises in Personal Presence and Confidence Skills and knows about colours. "I am not at all surprised about the row," she said. "The plain fact is that one wears grey when one does not want to be seen. The eye finds it difficult to focus on."

"Red, on the other hand, is fresh and dynamic. It evokes the most positive reactions."

She has a point. It may be a politically correct colour just now, but I can't ever see people standing at the Stretford End chanting: "Come on the Greys!"

"Besides," Barney added, "it is possible that some of the team might be partially colour-blind. Has anyone tested them?"

FURNILLY enough, the same thing happened at Leeds United a couple of months ago. The team's second strip, supplied by Umbro, was changed from green-and-blue to yellow-and-black. The players said they couldn't see one another.

However, England played their last game against Bulgaria wearing a strip not unadjacent to the hated United grey, also made by Umbro. The players did not complain.

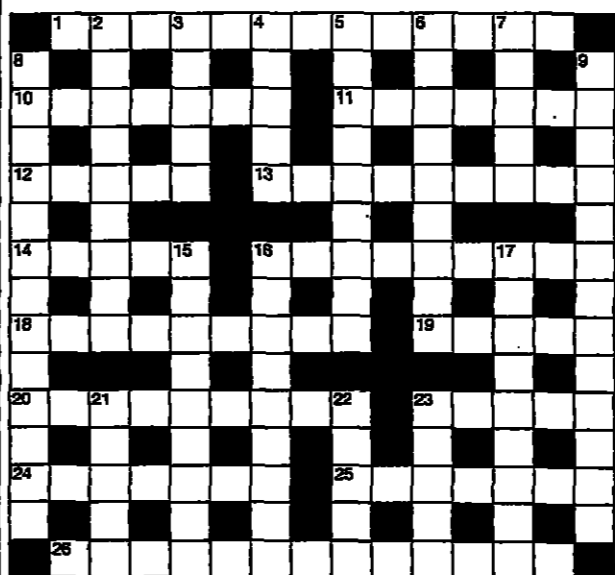
Fonder this may be Terry Venables prefers the England team not to be seen. Or perhaps Umbro has invented a secret, invisible fabric for the SAS and is using the left-over bits for football kit?

Politicians might get suits made from the same material. I demand an answer from the Rt Hon Gentleman, or I would if I could pick him out. The family thought that was a hoot.

"Golfers could clothe their mistresses in it," I remarked. That went down like a Greg Norman final round.

Guardian Crossword No 20,629

Set by Araucaria



- Across**
- 1, 10 Portion after portion of chips surrounding the queen will have coaches at sea (4-2-4-3-7)
 - 11 Victim of Dutch invasion (3,4)
 - 12 Pleased to meet you: why do otherwise? (5)
 - 13 Lateral section of team with experts? (4,5)
 - 14 Dumb actor portrays setter in space station (5)
 - 16 Monkey's blue in Munro's tale (4,5)
 - 18 Massive boat for attractive fish? Very good (5-4)
 - 19 Pierce Goon's ear (5)
 - 20 Most of Spanish Town's come back for a converter (5)
 - 23 Stick with a flower or a fish (5)
 - 24 Turn ravenous — turn away with anorexia (7)
- Down**
- 2 Was no more, destroyed by ferretes on river (5)
 - 3 Ordinary people remained without it (5)
 - 4 The striving of man is useless (5)
 - 5 Love clue and do it all right (4-5)
 - 6 Persists about member with order for standards in the street (4-5)
 - 7 Artist in sport finds colourless liquid (5)
 - 8 See 25
 - 9 Bird on meadow, possibly a target for 2 (5,7)

ACROSS: 1, 10 PORTION, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. DOWN: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

We have seen many fine productions of Uncle Vanya in Britain. We tend to define them, however, by the casting of the vanquished Vanya and the ecological Astrov: Redgrave and Olivier, Gambon and Pryce, McKellen and Sher have formed unforgettable partnerships. But the key feature of Peter Stein's breathtaking new production is that it is Sonya and Elena who dominate the evening; it becomes the tragedy of two women.

Michael Billington **£2** page 10

صحنه من الاصل